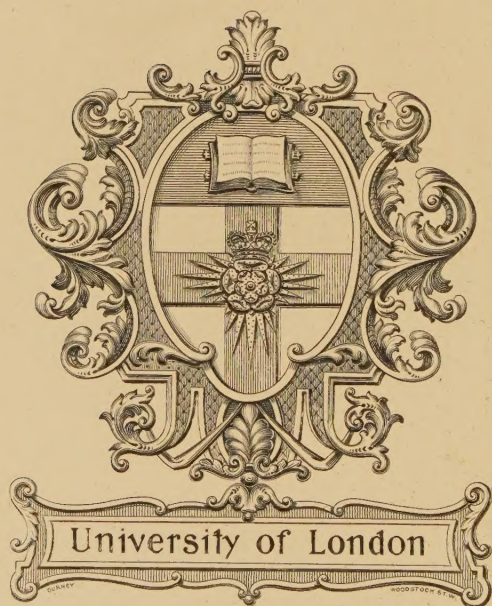


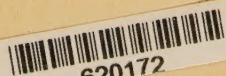
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HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

50^o VICTORIÆ, 1887.

VOL. CCCXI.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 1887

TO

THE TENTH DAY OF MARCH 1887.

SECOND VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

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1887.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO

VOLUME CCCXI.

THIRD SERIES.

LORDS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON WARLIKE STORES — DEFECTIVE WEAPONS AND STORES—MOTION FOR RETURNS—

Moved, That there be laid before this House—

“Return of the schedule of complaints and defects printed by the War Office for the use of the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores now sitting, as to the weapons and stores supplied for the use of Her Majesty’s Navy,”—(*The Earl of Harrowby*) ..

Page

1

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

INDIA—THE QUEEN’S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS—Postponement of Questions, The Earl of Derby ..

7

RAILWAY RATES—Question, Lord Vernon; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Lord Stanley of Preston)

7

Appellate Jurisdiction Bill (No. 25)—

Moved, “That the Bill be now read 3^d,”—(*The Lord Chancellor*) ..

8

Amendment *moved*, to leave out (“now”) and add at the end of the Motion (“this day six months,”)—(*The Lord Denman*.)

On Question that (“now”) stand part of the Motion?—*Resolved* in the affirmative:—Bill read 2^d accordingly: An Amendment made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons. [5.0.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Sutton District Water Bill—

Moved, “That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Sutton District Water Bill, to insert a Clause in such Bill by which provision shall be made for the offer of any additional capital by public auction or tender at the best price which can be obtained, unless the Committee on the Bill shall report that such provision ought not to be required, with the reasons on which their opinion is founded,”—(*Mr. Molloy*) ..

9

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 18.]

Page

QUESTIONS.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER—THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRADE AND AGRICULTURE—Question, Mr. Chaplin; Answer, Mr. Speaker ..	15
SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—CONSERVATORS OF THE LOUGH NEAGH DISTRICT—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	15
ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICES—THE NEW BUILDINGS—Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	16
LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS, 1883 AND 1885—THE ENNIS POOR LAW UNION—SCHEME UNDER THE ACTS—Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	16
METROPOLITAN POLICE—INSPECTORS OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT—Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	17
COLLECTION OF TITHES—BIDDENDEN, KENT—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	17
INLAND FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE RIVER AVOCA—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	18
BURIALS—REMOVAL OF THE DEAD FROM CHURCHYARDS AND BURIAL GROUNDS—Questions, Mr. Pitt-Lewis, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	19
BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—TEACHERS AND THE ORANGE SOCIETY—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	23
BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MRS. HARRIET SENTER, A TEACHER IN BELFAST—Questions, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	23
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS—UNOCCUPIED FARMS—Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) ..	24
WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT, 1878—"FURTHER LEGISLATION"—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	25
HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE—CHANCERY DIVISION—DISTRIBUTION OF BUSINESS—Question, Mr. F. W. Maclean; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) ..	25
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—LORD ANNESLEY'S ESTATE AT BELFAST—Questions, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	26
PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—BELMULLET PIER—Questions, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	27
ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—ALLOWANCES FOR HORSES—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	28
ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—MARCHING ALLOWANCES TO VOLUNTEERS—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	28
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION—IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE—MR. PAGET, WANDSWORTH POLICE COURT—Questions, Mr. H. J. Wilson, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 18.]

Page

PORT AND DOCKS BOARD, DUBLIN—TENDERS—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	30
PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE—REVISION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS' LIST—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	30
STATE OF IRELAND—PROCESSION OF ORANGE BANDS—BALLYMONEY—Questions, Mr. Pinkerton ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	30
MINING INDUSTRIES (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	31
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—THE RETURN—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ; Question, Mr. Sexton [No reply]	31
COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—ACCOUNTS OF OFFICIAL ASSIGNEES—MR. L. H. JAMES—Questions, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. P. M'Donald ; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	32
CORPORATION OFFICIALS—BRIBERY BY COMMISSIONS—Questions, Mr. Howorth ; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	33
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ANNUAL HOLIDAYS—Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	34
POLICE AND CONSTABULARY FORCES IN GREAT BRITAIN—SUPERANNUATION—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	34
ADMIRALTY—NAVAL OPERATIONS IN NEW GUINEA—Question, Dr. Cameron ; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	34
EGYPT—RIGHT OF COMMERCIAL CONVENTION WITH FOREIGN POWERS—Question, Mr. W. H. James ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	35
CHINA AND BURMAH—THE DELIMITATION COMMISSION, 1886—Question, Mr. Bryce ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	35
LUNACY—DETENTION OF AN ALLEGED LUNATIC—Question, Mr. Conybeare ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)	36
POST OFFICE (INDIA)—TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—PRESIDENCY ALLOWANCE—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	36
THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—COLEFORD—SENTENCE ON AN OLD MAN—Question, Mr. T. Blake ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	37
PRISON LABOUR—MAT-WEAVING—Question, Mr. H. Gardner ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)	37
POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—TRANSMISSION OF A FALSE AND UNSIGNED TELEGRAM—Question, Mr. Conybeare ; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster)	38
MINES (SCOTLAND)—ASSISTANT INSPECTORSHIP OF MINES IN WESTERN DIVISION—Question, Mr. Cunningham Graham ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	39
ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEERS—EXTRA PAY TO PERMANENT STAFF—Question, Colonel Eyre ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	39
BURIALS—ATTLEBOROUGH NEW CEMETERY—Question, Mr. Cozens-Hardy ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	40

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 18.]

Page

ADMIRALTY—"GREENWICH SIXPENCES' FUND"—Question, Dr. R. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) ..	41
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—EXTRA PAY TO THE MILITARY—Questions, Mr. Lafone, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	41
THE PACIFIC PORTS—ILL-USAGE OF BRITISH SEAMEN—Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	41
PRIVY COUNCIL (IRELAND)—DATES OF MEETING, AUGUST, 1886, TO JANUARY, 1887—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	42
SEA FISHERIES—COLLECTION OF STATISTICS—Question, Mr. Rowntree; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	42
THE SLAVE TRADE—REVIVAL IN THE SOUDAN AND THE RED SEA LITORAL—Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	43
ROYAL COMMISSION ON DEPRESSION OF TRADE AND AGRICULTURE—Question, Sir John R. Mowbray; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	44
TRADE AND COMMERCE—MANUFACTURE AND FALSE MARKING OF GOODS AT SHEFFIELD—Questions, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Coleridge; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	44
INDIA—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); Question, Mr. Conybeare [No reply] ..	45
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—"VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS"—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	46
INCOME TAX—FOREIGN COMPANIES TRADING IN ENGLAND—Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	47
PUBLIC BUSINESS—RAILWAY RATES AND LAND REFORM—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	47

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE QUEEN'S SPEECH—REPORT—Report of Address <i>brought up</i> , and read a first and second time ..	47
BULGARIA—ABDICATION OF PRINCE ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG—Amendment proposed, At the end of the 3rd paragraph, to insert the words—"But, at the same time, humbly to express to Your Majesty that steps taken on behalf of Your Government, without the concurrence of the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, to prevent the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, were not in accordance with the interests of this Country, and were fraught with danger to the peace of Europe,"—(Mr. Labouchere) ..	63
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After debate, Question put, and <i>negatived</i> .	
SOUTH AFRICA—AFFAIRS OF ZULULAND—Observations, Dr. Clark:—Debate thereon ..	87
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE BARBAVILLA MURDER TRIAL—Amendment proposed, At the end of the 12th paragraph, to insert the words—"And humbly to represent to Your Majesty that it is the duty of Your Government to institute a full and searching inquiry into the means by which convictions were obtained against certain persons at present undergoing penal servitude for an alleged conspiracy to murder at Barbavilla, in the county of Westmeath,"—(Mr. Twiss) ..	106
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After short debate, Question put, and <i>negatived</i> .	
Address <i>agreed to</i> :—To be presented by Privy Councillors.	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 18.]

Page

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Order for Committee read 114
After short debate, Committee *deferred* till *Monday*.

First Offenders Bill [Bill 132]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Addison*) .. 115

After debate, Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Edward Harrington*.)

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived*

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 7th March.

Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment Bill [Bill 155]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Albert Rollit*).. 127

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Friday* 18th March.

Q U E S T I O N .

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—PREMATURE PUBLICATION OF THE MERCHANTIZE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL—Questions, Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 129

M O T I O N S .

SUPPLY—

Resolved, That this House will, on *Monday* next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Ordered, That the several Estimates presented to this House, during the present Session, be referred to the Committee of Supply.

WAYS AND MEANS—

Resolved, That this House will, upon *Monday* next, resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[12.50.]

Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Solater-Booth, Mr. Elton, Mr. Mark Stewart*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 176] .. 132

LORDS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WATERFORD — Postponement of Question, Lord Brabourne 132

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 7)—

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) 132

Amendment *moved*,

"That the numbering of the clauses throughout the Bill be amended, so that every clause (whether now numbered as a section or a sub-section) be numbered as successive sections of 'substantive enactments' (except those now indicated by letters prefixed, and which are parts of one sentence), and that all references in the Bill be altered accordingly,"—(*The Lord Grimthorpe*.)

After short debate, Amendment *negatived*:—House in Committee accordingly.

Amendments made; House *resumed*, and to be again in Committee on *Monday* next.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 21.]

	Page
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE IRISH JURY LAWS—Question, Earl Cadogan ; Answer, Lord Fitzgerald	141
	[6.0.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Great Eastern Railway Bill (by Order)—

<i>Moved</i> , “That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(<i>Colonel Makins</i>) ..	142
After short debate, Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> :—Bill read a second time, and <i>committed</i> .	

Ambleside Railway Bill—

<i>Moved</i> , “That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Ambleside Railway Bill, to inquire and report whether the proposed Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public, who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject,”—(<i>Mr. Bryce</i>)	145
---	-----

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word “whether” to the end of the Question, in order to insert the words “the scenery in the neighbourhood will be injuriously affected or otherwise, and that the Committee have power to receive local Evidence upon the subject,”—(*Mr. Labouchere*.)

Question proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :”—After short debate, *Moved*, “That the Debate be now adjourned,”—(*Mr. W. H. James* :)—After further short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday*.

QUESTIONS.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—DURRUS PETTY SESSIONS—HEGARTY—Question, Mr. Gilhooly ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	153
ASYLUMS (IRELAND)—MONAGHAN ASYLUM—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	154
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—EVICITION OF MRS. CONLON, CO. ROSCOMMON—Questions, Mr. Cox ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	155
ARMY—EXAMINATIONS FOR COMMISSIONS—THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE—Question, Mr. Johnston ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	156
PARLIAMENTARY REGISTRATION ACT, 1878—CASE OF HENRY HOLDER, REGISTRATION AGENT AT STAFFORD—Question, Mr. M'Laren ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	156
IRELAND—CASHEL TOWN COMMISSIONERS—AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS—Question, Mr. Condon ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	157
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENTS—CO. WESTMEATH—Questions, Mr. D. Sullivan, Mr. Tuite ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	158
POLICE (METROPOLIS)—WANDSWORTH POLICE COURT—Question, Mr. Octavius Morgan ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	159
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—DULEEK PETTY SESSIONS—Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	159

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 21.]

Page

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—BOXER MARTINI-HENRY CARTRIDGES AT WOOLWICH—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote)	159
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—CARTRIDGES IN STORE—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote)	160
POOR LAW (IRELAND)—BAILIEBOROUGH BOARD OF GUARDIANS—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	160
LAW AND JUSTICE—THE PRISON SERVICE (ENGLAND)—Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	161
POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE PATTERN POST—Question, Mr. Montagu; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	162
EGYPT—LIGHT DUES ON SHIPPING—Question, Mr. T. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	162
LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—EXTRA POLICE, CO. CORK—Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	162
SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE RIVER SHANNON—FINES ON A CONSERVATOR—Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	163
ARMY—PURCHASE OF ARMY HORSES IN CANADA—Question, General Sir William Crossman; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	164
JURORS' ACTS (IRELAND)—CONNAUGHT WINTER ASSIZES—THE CLERK OF THE CROWN—Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	165
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—ENDOWED SCHOOLS COMMISSIONERS—Questions, Mr. Biggar; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	165
EGYPT—SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF'S MISSION—Questions, Mr. Howorth, Sir Henry Tyler, Mr. Anderson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	166
CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM (IRELAND)—OCCUPATION BY THE POLICE—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	167
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—WESTPORT UNION, CO. MAYO—Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	168
ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—DISTURBANCES AT TONGA—Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	168
LAW AND JUSTICE—SALFORD CORPORATION GAS WORKS—"HUNTER v. LEVER"—Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	169
INLAND REVENUE—CUSTOM HOUSE, DUBLIN—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	169
ADMIRALTY—THE GUARDSHIP "BELLEISLE"—REPAIRS—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	170
TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS—REMEDIES AGAINST TRUSTEES—Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster)	170
CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1886—RECOVERY OF ARREARS OF RENT—Question, Mr. A. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour)	171
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—REPORT OF MR. WALLACE MACHARDY—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. John Morley; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	172

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
[February 21.]	
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—BELFAST POSTMEN—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	172
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SITTINGS AT SLIGO—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	173
IRELAND (DISTRESS, &c.)—DISTRESS IN KERRY—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Mr. E. Harrington [No reply] ..	173
FISHERIES (IRELAND)—CROWN SALMON FISHERIES—Question, Mr. A. L. Brown; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	174
ADMIRALTY—DOCKYARD SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	175
THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—EVICTIONS AT VENTRY—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	176
PRISONS (IRELAND)—RICHMOND PRISON—Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	176
POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—TELEGRAPH CLERKS—Question, Mr. H. S. Wright; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	177
ARMY MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT—MANUFACTURE OF STEEL AT WOOLWICH—Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	177
IRISH JURIES—APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	178
ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—REFERENCE TO A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE—Question, Viscount Curzon; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	179
NAVY—H.M.S. "AJAX"—GUN PRACTICE AT INNELLAN, ON THE CLYDE—Question, Colonel Malcolm; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	179
ADMIRALTY—REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NAVAL CONTRACTS—Question, Mr. R. W. Duff; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	180
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—APPOINTMENT OF SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WATERFORD—Questions, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	180
COAL MINES—EXPLOSION AT CWTCH RHONDDA, SOUTH WALES—Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	181
AFFAIRS OF BULGARIA—THE DEBATE—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	181

PRIVILEGE.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF A PAPER—Personal Explanation, Mr. Mundella; Observations, Mr. Byron Reed ..	181
--	-----

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE) — RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION [FIRST NIGHT]—	
---	--

Moved, "That, at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate: "When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 21.]

Page

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued*.

bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 190

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. T. P. O' Connor* :)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed 209

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Lyon Playfair* :)—Motion *agreed to* :—Debate *adjourned till To-morrow*.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882 (DOLLAR INSTITUTION) —MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her consent from Section 22 of Scheme 88 of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, under 'The Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882,'"—(*Mr. A. L. Brown*) 271

After short debate, Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 77, Noes 135; Majority 58.—(*Div. List, No. 18.*) [1.30.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES AND SWORD BAYONETS—Explanation, The Under Secretary of State for War (*Lord Harris*) 279

INDIA—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS—Question, Observations, The Earl of Derby, The Earl of Lytton; Reply, The Secretary of State for India (*Viscount Cross*); Observations, The Marquess of Ripon 280

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [*H.L.*].—*Presented* (*The Earl of Milltown*); read 1st (*No. 28*) 286
[4.45.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22.

MOTION.

—o—

PARLIAMENT—MEETING OF THE HOUSE—ASH WEDNESDAY—

Moved, "That this House will meet To-morrow at Two of the clock,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 286

Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 240, Noes 86; Majority 154.—(*Div. List, No. 19.*)

PRIVILEGE.

—o—

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—Questions, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Storey; Answers, Mr. Speaker 286

QUESTIONS.

—o—

SASINE OFFICE, EDINBURGH—SALE OF STAMPS—Question, Mr. M'Ewan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Jackson*) 288

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 22.]	Page
HARBOURS, DOCKS, AND PIERS CLAUSES ACT, 1847—HARBOURS EXEMPT—LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	288
MERCHANT SHIPPING—ASSISTANCE TO VESSELS NEAR MILFORD HAVEN—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) ..	289
WRECKS AND LOSS OF LIFE IN THE BRISTOL CHANNEL—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	289
MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "CATERINA"—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	290
INDIA (MADRAS)—COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	291
THE NORTH AMERICAN FISHERY—CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES—THE FISHERY DISPUTES—Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	291
POST OFFICE—POSTAGE TO INDIA AND CHINA THROUGH BELGIUM—Question, Mr. King; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	291
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE MURDER AT BALLYCAR, CO. CLARE—Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	292
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE LETTER CARRIER BETWEEN CARRICK-ON-SHANNON AND DRUMSNA—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	292
RAILWAYS (IRELAND)—LOAN TO THE SLIGO, &C. RAILWAY COMPANY—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	293
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MR. F. MORRICE—COUNTY CLARE GRAND JURY—Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	294
HARBOURS, &C. (SCOTLAND)—GIGULUM SOUND—Question, Colonel Malcolm; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	294
REVISION OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS (IRELAND)—BOROUGH OF BELFAST—Question, Mr. Maurice Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	295
METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ACT, 1878—FORM OF CERTIFICATE—Questions, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) ..	295
INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—ASSESSMENT ON PUBLIC BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES, ST. PANCRAS—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	297
ARMY—CIRCULAR OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—SUBSCRIPTION TO THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—Questions, Mr. P. Stanhope, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	297
ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES—FORTIFICATIONS OF THE FRENCH—Questions, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Commander Bethell; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	298
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES AND SWORD BAYONETS—Question, Major Rasch; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	299
ELECTION EXPENSES, 1886—THE RETURN—Question, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) ..	299
THE PACIFIC PORTS—ILL-USAGE OF BRITISH SEAMEN—Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	300

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 22.]

	<i>Page</i>
EGYPT—ENFORCEMENT OF THE CORVEE—Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	360
FACTORIES ACTS—THE TRUCK ACTS IN SCOTLAND—Questions, Mr. Watt, Dr. Clark; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) ..	301
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—"THE QUEEN <i>v.</i> DILLON AND OTHERS"—Question, Mr. W. A. Macdonald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	301
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—MURDER OF ——— MURPHY, NEAR KIL-LARNEY—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	302
COMMISSIONERS OF NORTHERN LIGHTS (SCOTLAND)—EXPENDITURE—Questions, Dr. Clark, Mr. Conybeare, Dr. Cameron; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	302
HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORT BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES—Question, Mr. G. W. Elliot; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	303
TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE DEPRESSION IN AGRICULTURE—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Heneage; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	304
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE—Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	305
ARMS (IRELAND) ACT—PROCLAMATION OF THE COOLGREANY MEETING—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	305

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [SECOND NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [21st February:]	
Question again proposed:—Debate <i>resumed</i> ..	306
After long debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(Mr. Flynn:)—After further short debate, Motion <i>agreed to</i> :—Debate further adjourned till <i>To-morrow</i> .	

MOTIONS.

—o—

POST OFFICE MAIL CONTRACT (HIGHLAND FISHERIES COMPANY, LIMITED)—RESOLUTION—	
<i>Ordered</i> , That the Contract with the Highland Fisheries Company, Limited, for the conveyance of Mails between Oban, Coll, Tyree, Barra, and Loch Boisdale, be approved,—(Mr. Jackson.)	
County Courts (Expenses) Bill— <i>Ordered</i> (Mr. Jackson, Mr. Attorney General, Sir Herbert Maxwell); <i>presented</i> , and read the first time [Bill 177] ..	388
Sanitary Registration of Buildings Bill— <i>Ordered</i> (Mr. Lacaita, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Guyer Hunter, Dr. Cameron, Sir Henry Roscoe); <i>presented</i> , and read the first time [Bill 178] ..	388
Merchandise (Fraudulent Marks) Bill— <i>Ordered</i> (Mr. Mundella, Mr. Acland, Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Bernard Coleridge, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Henry Wilson); <i>presented</i> , and read the first time [Bill 179] ..	388

[12.35.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [THIRD NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [21st February] :—	
Question again proposed :—Debate resumed ..	389
After debate, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood further adjourned till To-morrow. [5.50.]	

LORDS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24.

Page

Law of Evidence Amendment Bill (No. 23)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2 ^a ,"—(<i>The Lord Bramwell</i>) ..	430
After short debate, Motion agreed to :—Bill read 2 ^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.	

Justices' Jurisdiction Bill (No. 24)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2 ^a ,"—(<i>The Lord Bramwell</i>) ..	434
After short debate, Motion agreed to :—Bill read 2 ^a accordingly.	

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (Carrick-on-Suir) Bill [P.L.]—

Presented (<i>The Lord Privy Seal</i>) ; read 1 ^a (No. 30) ..	436
[5.15.]	

COMMONS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies Bill (by Order)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(<i>Lord Claud Hamilton</i>) ..	437
After short debate, Question put, and agreed to :—Bill read a second time, and committed.	

Ambleside Railway Bill (by Order)—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [21st February:]—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :"—Debate resumed ..	440
After debate, Question put :—The House divided ; Ayes 225, Noes 118 ; Majority 107.—(Div. List, No. 20.)	
Main Question put :—The House divided ; Ayes 231, Noes 133 ; Majority 98.—(Div. List, No. 21.)	

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Ambleside Railway Bill, to inquire and report whether the proposed Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public, who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise ; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject,—(*Mr. Bryce*.)

QUESTIONS.

—o—

INDIA—EXTENSION OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM IN INDIA AND BURMAH—	
Question, Mr. Maclure ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (<i>Sir John Gorst</i>) ..	454
NEWFOUNDLAND—THE COD FISHERIES—Question, Mr. Courtney Kenny ;	
Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (<i>Sir Henry Holland</i>) ..	455
ADMIRALTY REGULATIONS—SUPPORT AND EDUCATION OF CATHOLIC ORPHANS	
—Question, Mr. M'Cartan ; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) ..	456
SOUTH AFRICA—ZULULAND—Question, Mr. Channing ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (<i>Sir Henry Holland</i>) ..	457

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

<i>[February 24.]</i>	<i>Page</i>
PRISON SITES—HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES—COLDBATH FIELDS— Questions, Mr. Jennings, Captain Penton; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	458
GOLD AND SILVER CURRENCY (ROYAL COMMISSION)—THE FIRST REPORT— —Question, Mr. Webster; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) ..	459
WESTMINSTER BRIDGE—Question, Mr. Webster; Answer, The First Com- missioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	460
ADMIRALTY—"H.M.S. FALCON"—PRIZE MONEY—Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, Lord Charles Beresford (A Lord of the Admiralty) ..	460
INLAND REVENUE—COLLECTION OF INCOME TAX—Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	461
STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)—NEW LINE OF ST. MARTIN'S PLACE —Question, Mr. Whitmore; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	462
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—COMPENSATION TO THE LOCAL POLICE—Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	462
VACCINATION—INCREASE OF SYPHILIS—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	462
INLAND REVENUE—ASSESSMENTS IN EALING AND BRENTFORD—Question, Mr. Bigwood; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	463
STATE OF IRELAND—EXTRA POLICE IN CORK COUNTY—Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks- Beach) ..	465
EDUCATION (SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT)—ELEMENTARY SCHOLARSHIPS —Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) ..	465
CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS—J. M. WILLIAMSON—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks- Beach) ..	466
THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SITTINGS IN CLARE CO.—Question, Mr. Jordan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks- Beach) ..	466
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—SECRETARIES OF GRAND JURIES—Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	467
RIVERS POLLUTION—POLLUTION OF THE UPPER THAMES—Question, Colonel Dawnay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	467
ARMY (AMMUNITION)—SOLID-DRAWN CARTRIDGES—Question, Mr. Caldwell; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	468
THE CURRENCY—DETERIORATION OF THE GOLD COINAGE—Question, Mr. Montagu; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	468
ALLOTMENTS FOR SMALL HOUSEHOLDERS—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Cobb; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	469
EXPENDITURE OF LIGHTHOUSE BOARDS—Questions, Dr. Cameron; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	469
THE CIVIL SERVICE—LOWER DIVISION CLERKS AND WRITERS—Question, Mr. Morgan Howard; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	470
THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SALE OF LANDS IN COUNTY DONEGAL— Question, Mr. O'Hea; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	471
SOUTH AMERICA—CHILE—IMPRISONMENT OF A SAILOR NAMED CARROL AT PUNTA ARENAS—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	471

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 24.]

Page

STATE OF IRELAND—PROCLAMATION OF MEETINGS IN WICKLOW AND WEXFORD—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	473
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—CO. CLARE—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Cox; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	473
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—"THE QUEEN v. JOHN DILLON"—Questions, Mr. W. A. Macdonald, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	474
ARMY AND NAVY—"CONTRACTS AND SUPPLIES"—Question, Mr. J. Rowlands; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	475
LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—THE CANTEN COMMITTEE OF FORT GEORGE, INVERNESS—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick) ..	476
MINES REGULATION—THE ACCIDENT AT THE RHONDDA COLLIERY—Questions, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. W. Abraham (Glamorgan, Rhondda); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	477
THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—VICTORIA PARK—Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	478
BULGARIA—MR. CONDIE STEPHEN—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	479
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES AND SWORD BAYONETS—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) ..	479
INLAND REVENUE—EXPERIMENT IN TOBACCO CULTIVATION—Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	481
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WATERFORD—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. P. J. Power; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	481
ARMY (AMMUNITION)—BOXER MARTINI-HENRY CARTRIDGES—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) ..	482
HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORT FROM GREAT BRITAIN—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	482
FOREIGN POWERS—ADVICE AND REMONSTRANCE—Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	483
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	484
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"THE QUEEN v. JOHN DILLON AND OTHERS"—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	484
ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—DISTURBANCES IN TONGA—Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) ..	484
THE QUEEN'S SPEECH — HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS reported ..	485

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [FOURTH NIGHT]—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [21st February:]—Question again proposed:—Debate resumed ..	485
--	-----

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 24.]

Page

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE, &c.—continued.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, after the word "That," to insert the words "when Mr. S the
Chair,"—(*Colonel Nolan*) .. 493

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted :"—After short
debate, Question put :—The House divided ; Ayes 82, Noes 204 ;
Majority 122.—(Div. List, No. 22.)

Amendment proposed, in line 1, to leave out the words "at any time,"—
(*Mr. Parnell*) .. 503

Question proposed, "That the words "at any time" stand part of the
Question :"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived*.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the words "other than a Question
arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland,"—
(*Mr. Parnell*) .. 508

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted :"—After
short debate, Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment,
after the words "Law in," to insert the words "Great Britain and,"
—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis*) .. 518

Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the proposed
Amendment :"—After further debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

Question put,

"That the words 'other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the
stringency of the Criminal Law in Great Britain and Ireland' be there inserted."
The House divided ; Ayes 155, Noes 264 ; Majority 109.—(Div. List,
No. 23.)

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the
words "other than a Vote in Committee of Supply,"—(*Mr. Parnell*).. 541

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted :"—After short
debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. J.
Rowlands* :)—After further short debate, Motion *agreed to* :—Debate
adjourned till To-morrow.

Foynes Harbour (Transfer) Bill [Bill 159]—

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee .. 551

Moved, "That the Committee do consist of Five Members,"—(*Mr.
Penrose Fitzgerald*.)

After short debate, Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Five,"
in order to insert the word "Seven,"—(*Dr. Tanner*.)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Five' stand part of the Question :"
—After further short debate, Question put, and *negatived*.

Question, "That the word 'Seven' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to* :
—Seven *inserted*.

Ordered, That Four be nominated by the House, and Three by the Com-
mittee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill, presented not later than three clear days
before the sitting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee, and that such of
the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses,
be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

Colonial Service (Pensions) Bill [Bill 158]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Herbert
Maxwell*) .. 552

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Dr. Tanner* :)—After
short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *com-
mitted for Thursday 10th March*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 24.]

Page

M O T I O N S .

—o—

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN WALES)— MOTION FOR A RETURN—

Moved, for a—

“Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the Bishops, Chapters, and Archdeacons, &c., in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales,”—(*Mr. Kenyon*) .. 556

After short debate, Motion *deferred till To-morrow.*

Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill—*Ordered (Dr. Cameron, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Graham); presented, and read the first time [Bill 180]* .. 557

[1.30.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25.

Potter's Patent Bill—

Moved, “That the Bill be now read 2^a,”—(The Earl De La Warr) .. 557

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

ARMY—INSANITARY CONDITION OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND DUBLIN BARRACKS—

Question, Observations, The Marquess of Ormonde, Lord Ellenborough; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) 559

[4.45.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25.

P R I V A T E B U S I N E S S .

—o—

Dublin Southern District Tramways Bill—

Moved, “That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(Sir Charles Forster) 562

Second Reading *deferred till Monday.*

Q U E S T I O N S .

—o—

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND)—CAMBUSNETHAN PUBLIC SCHOOL—
Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) .. 562

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ENGLISH AND IRISH OFFICIALS—Question, Colonel Nolan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 563

MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—LURGAN BOARD OF GUARDIANS—HUGH DONNELLY, OF DERRYTRASNA, CO. ARMAGH—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) .. 564

MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. H. H. WHITNEY, KINSALE UNION, KERRY—
Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) .. 564

FISHERIES (IRELAND)—COLLECTION OF STATISTICS—Question, Mr. J. A. Blake; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) 565

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (CATTLE) ACTS—OUTBREAK OF ANTHRAX IN ESSEX—
Question, Mr. Beadel; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) .. 566

ARMY—ROYAL COMMISSION ON WARLIKE STORES—THE REPORT—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) .. 566

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THOMAS WALSH, BALLYDAFF, CO. MAYO—Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) .. 567

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 25.]	Page
METROPOLITAN PUBLIC CARRIAGE ACT, 1869—LICENCES—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	567
FISHERY PIERS (IRELAND)—TOLLS ON BELMULLET PIER—Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	568
RAILWAYS (INDIA)—EXTENSION OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM—Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	568
ADMIRALTY — THE GUARDSHIP “AJAX” AT PRACTICE—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	569
LAW AND POLICE — REFORMATORY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HAMPSTEAD HEATH — Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	571
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—BUILDING GRANTS TO SCIENCE SCHOOLS AND ART SCHOOLS—Questions, Mr. L. Fry, Mr. Woodall; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	572
POOR LAW — CASE OF JAMES WESTBURY, AN AGRICULTURAL LABOURER — Questions, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir Henry Tyler; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	572
EJECTMENTS (IRELAND)—KNOCKMOYLEEN, BALLYCROY, CO. MAYO—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	574
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—LISTOWEL, CO. KERRY — Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Stack; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	575
NAVY—STRANDING OF THE GUNBOAT “FIRM” — SIR WILLIAM THOMSON'S DEEP SEA SOUNDING MACHINE—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	576
POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — GRANGEGETH POST OFFICE — Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	576
INCOME TAX—MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT—Question, Captain Selwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	577
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—MANUFACTURE OF MACHINE GUNS AT ENFIELD—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote)	577
ARMY—THE ROYAL ARTILLERY — RUMOURED REDUCTION OF THE FORCE — Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	578
EMIGRATION STATISTICS FOR 1886—THE RETURN—Question, Mr. S. Smith; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	578
CORONERS' INQUESTS—VIEW OF THE BODIES—Question, Mr. Paulton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	578
EVICCTIONS AT BURRADON COLLIERY, COUNTY NORTHUMBERLAND—Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	579
TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS — CARDIFF TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK — Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	579
“BOARD OF TRADE JOURNAL” — ADVERTISING AGENTS — Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	580
LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881—COUNTY COURT RULES—Question, Mr. Maurice Healy; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	580
QUEEN'S PLATES—Questions, Mr. Mildmay, Colonel Nolan; Answers, Sir Herbert Maxwell (A Lord of the Treasury)	580

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 25.]

Page

INDIA—PENSIONS FOR GENERAL SERVICES — AMOUNT PAID IN ENGLAND — Question, Mr. King; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	581
INDIA—TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGES—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	582
GRANTS TO MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	582
AFRICA (SOUTH)—PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS—LORD SALISBURY'S LETTER IN "THE TIMES"—Questions, Mr. O. V. Morgan, Sir Robert Fowler; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	583
PUBLIC BUSINESS—COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith):—Short debate thereon	584
LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACTS—REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION — Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	585

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — RULES OF PROCEDURE — RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [FIFTH NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended:—Question again proposed:—Debate resumed	586
After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 92, Noes 261; Majority 169.—(Div. List, No. 24.)	
Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "Question," the words "not being a Question relating to the Procedure of the House,"—(Mr. Sexton)	610
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted: "—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 80, Noes 170; Majority 90.—(Div. List, No. 25.)	
Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the words "other than the Question, on going into Committee of Supply, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(Mr. Thomas Gill)	625
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted: "—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 78, Noes 210; Majority 132.—(Div. List, No. 26.)	
Amendment proposed,	
In line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "and debated in the House for six hours, or in Committee of the Whole House for one hour,"—(Mr. Parnell)	637
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 82, Noes 268; Majority 186.—(Div. List, No. 27.)	
Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," "and has been replied to by at least four Members,"—(Mr. Parnell.)	
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted: "—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.	
Main Question, as amended, proposed	652
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned," — (Mr. Esslemont:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn.	
Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "and after adequate debate,"—(Mr. Esslemont.)	
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted: "—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.	
Main Question again proposed:—Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(Mr. W. H. Smith:)—Motion agreed to:—Debate adjourned till Tuesday next.	[1.0.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

LORDS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

Page

Dover (Corporation) Harbour Bill—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Earl Stanhope*) .. 656

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Earl Granville*.)

After short debate, on Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion? Their Lordships *divided*; Contents 50, Not-Contents 45; *Resolved* in the affirmative:—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

ARMY—ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE, SANDHURST, AND ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH—REPORT OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS—Question, Observations, The Earl of Strafford; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) 668

THE CURRENCY, GOLD AND SILVER (ROYAL COMMISSION)—Question, Observations, The Duke of Marlborough; Reply, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) .. 671

Church Patronage Bill (No. 26)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*) 678

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Grimthorpe*:)—Debate *adjourned*.

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Stanley of Preston*); read 1^a (No. 32) [8.15.] 689

COMMONS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

Dublin Southern District Tramways Bill (by Order)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Dillwyn*) .. 690

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS—STATUS—Question, Major Rasch; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) .. 690

INDIA—ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—EXCLUSION OF EUROPEAN ARTICLES—Question, Mr. Hoyle; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 691

INTESTATES (SCOTLAND)—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 691

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND)—PRIVATE PROSECUTION—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) .. 692

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET—INSANITARY CONDITION—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 692

VACCINATION ACTS—KEIGHLEY, &C.—Question, Mr. Barran; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) .. 693

ARMY—REPORTED REDUCTION OF HORSE ARTILLERY—Question, General Fraser; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) .. 694

POST OFFICE—CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE—PROMOTION—Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 694

IRELAND—LETTER OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Dr. Commins [No reply] 695

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
[February 28.]	
INDIA (MADRAS)—THE COLLECTOR OF CHINGLEPUT—Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	695
INDIA (MADRAS)—BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE—Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	697
FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	697
COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS—DAUNT'S ROCK, CORK HARBOUR—Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	698
FISHERY WEIRS (IRELAND)—STATE WEIRS ON THE LOWER SHANNON—Question, Mr. W. Abraham (Limerick, W.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	699
BORNEO—THE LIMBANG RIVER—Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	699
THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—BATTERSEA PARK—Question, Mr. Baggallay; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	700
LOSS OF LIFE FROM FISHING VESSELS—Question, Mr. A. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	701
CHARITY COMMISSION—SCHEME FOR CHRIST'S HOSPITAL—Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) ..	701
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SPEECH OF MAJOR GEORGE JOHNSTON, J.P., AT GLENTIES, CO. DONEGAL—Questions, Captain M'Calmont, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	702
NAVY—PEMBROKE DOCKYARD—DEFECTIVE SHEERS—Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	702
SASINE OFFICE, EDINBURGH—REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) ..	703
POST OFFICE—MAIL SERVICE TO THE ISLAND OF HARRIS—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) ..	703
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE BOXER MARTINI-HENRY CARTRIDGES—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) ..	704
ARMY—PURCHASE OF HORSES FOR MILITARY SERVICE—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	704
SKYE CROFTERS—WITHDRAWAL OF POLICE—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) ..	705
BURIALS ACTS—BROMPTON CEMETERY—Questions, Mr. Baggallay; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	705
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—PURCHASERS OF GLEBE LANDS—Questions, Mr. Reynolds; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	706
MAURITIUS—SIR GEORGE BOWEN—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) ..	706
POST OFFICE—THE SUBMARINE CABLE COMPANY—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	707
ARMY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT)—MANUFACTURE OF STEEL AT WOOLWICH—Questions, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	708
ARMY—THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—THE RAGLAN BARRACKS—Questions, Conybeare; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	708

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 28.]

	<i>Page</i>
LAW OF EVIDENCE—EVIDENCE OF ACCUSED PERSONS—Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy [No reply]	709
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE GRANGEGEITH LETTER CARRIER—Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	709
LUNACY LAWS—ALLEGED DETENTION OF A FEMALE—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)	710
POST OFFICE—POSTAGE RATES FOR INDIA—Question, Mr. King; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	710
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—EVICCTIONS IN LEITRIM—Questions, Mr. Conway, Sir John Swinburne; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Dr. Tanner [No reply]	711
NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—THE FISHERY QUESTION—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	713
ADMIRALTY—COALING STATIONS—THE SEYCHELLES—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	714
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—SAMUEL DOWNING, CO. KERRY—Question, Mr. Sheehan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	714
AFRICA (EAST)—PORTUGAL—THE ZANZIBAR COAST—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	715
STATE OF IRELAND—PROHIBITION OF MEETING AT COOLGREANY—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	716
BRITISH HONDURAS—Question, Mr. Marjoribanks; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	718
THE INDIAN OCEAN—THE SEYCHELLES—MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD—Questions, Mr. Carew, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	718
INLAND REVENUE—THE DOG TAX—Question, Mr. Coghill; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	718
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—THE BANKERS' ACCOUNT OF THE MACROOM BOARD OF GUARDIANS—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	719
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—BANBRIDGE BOARD OF GUARDIANS—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	720
ARTERIAL DRAINAGE (IRELAND)—SHANNON DRAINAGE AND NAVIGATION WORKS—LECARROW HARBOUR—Question, Mr. O'Kelly; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	721
THE WATCH TRADE—HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES—MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	722
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS—Question, Mr. Walsh; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	722
THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—SPECIAL SERVICE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	722
ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—REFERENCE TO A SELECT COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	723
AMERICA (SOUTH)—VENEZUELA—SUSPENSION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	723

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 28.]

	<i>Page</i>
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—Question, Mr. Curzon; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	724
PARLIAMENT—ORDER—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—NOTICE OF MOTION ON GOING INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, Mr. Speaker	724
METROPOLIS—CHURCH PARADE OF SOCIALISTS AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL—Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	725

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY — *considered* in Committee — CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7)— (In the Committee.)

CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £825, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Maintenance and Repair of Marlborough House" ..	725
After short debate, Question put:—The Committee <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 209, Noes 99; Majority 110.—(Div. List, No. 28.)	
(2.) £8,200, Supplementary, Houses of Parliament.—After short debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i> ..	726
(3.) £9,275, Supplementary, Public Buildings, Great Britain.—After short debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i> ..	730
(4.) £800, New Admiralty and War Office.—After debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i> ..	738
(5.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,900, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, including Rents and Furniture, and for the Maintenance of certain Cemeteries Abroad" ..	752
<i>Moved</i> , "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,500, be granted, &c.,"—(Mr. Labouchere :)—After short debate, Question put, and <i>negatived</i> .	
Original Question again proposed ..	755
<i>Moved</i> , "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,400, be granted &c.,"—(Mr. Labouchere :)—After short debate, Question put:—The Committee <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 123, Noes 153; Majority 30.—(Div. List, No. 29.)	
Original Question again proposed ..	767
Question put:—The Committee <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 151, Noes 111; Majority 40.—(Div. List, No. 30.)	

CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF CIVIL DEPARTMENTS.

(6.) £658, Supplementary, Foreign Office.—After short debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i> ..	767
(7.) £10, Supplementary, Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade.—After short debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i> ..	768
(8.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £4,595, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Civil Service Commission" ..	775
<i>Moved</i> , "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,995, be granted, &c.,"—(Mr. Arthur O'Connor :)—After debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	
Original Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> .	
(9.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Local Government Board, including various Grants in Aid of Local Taxation" ..	804
After short debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £800, be granted, &c.,"—(Mr. Barry :)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	
Original Question again proposed ..	819
After short debate, Original Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> .	
(10.) £107, Supplementary, Secretary for Scotland's Office.	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[February 28.]

Page

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(11.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £287, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and the incidental Expenses of the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland" ..	823
After short debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(<i>Colonel Nolan</i> :)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	
Original Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> .	
Resolutions to be reported.	

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,560, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the Establishments connected therewith" ..	834
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(<i>Mr. Parnell</i> :)—After short debate, Question put :—The Committee <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 93, Noes 212 ; Majority 119.—(<i>Div. List, No. 31.</i>)	
Original Question again proposed ..	841
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair,"—(<i>Mr. Dillwyn</i> :)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	
Resolutions to be reported <i>To-morrow</i> ; Committee also report Progress ; to sit again upon <i>Wednesday</i> .	
Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) Bill [Bill 135]—	
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(<i>Mr. David Plunket</i>) ..	842
Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> :—Bill read a second time.	
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection,"—(<i>Mr. David Plunket</i> :)—Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> .	
Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure Bill [Bill 131]—	
Order for Second Reading read ..	844
Second Reading <i>deferred</i> till <i>Monday</i> 14th March.	
County Courts (Expenses) Bill [Bill 177]—	
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(<i>Mr. Jackson</i>) ..	845
Motion <i>agreed to</i> :—Bill read a second time, and <i>committed</i> for <i>Monday</i> 14th March.	
Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—	
Order for Committee read :— <i>Moved</i> , "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(<i>Sir Michael Hicks-Beach</i>) ..	845
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(<i>Mr. T. M. Healy</i> :)—After short debate, Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> :—Debate <i>adjourned</i> till <i>To-morrow</i> .	

MOTIONS.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) COMMISSION — MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—	
<i>Moved</i> , "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme for the management of the Mackintosh Farr Fund,"—(<i>Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh</i>) ..	852
Motion <i>postponed</i> .	
Owners of Dogs' Liability Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Addison, Mr. Arthur O'Connor</i>) ; presented, and read the first time [Bill 181] ..	853
VOL. CCCXI. [THIRD SERIES.] [e]	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
[<i>February 28.</i>]	
Vexatious Indictments Amendment Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Addison, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Fulton</i>); presented, and read the first time [Bill 182]..	853
Licences (Belfast) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Peter M'Donald, Mr. Reynolds</i>); presented, and read the first time [Bill 183]	853
Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, Mr. Bond</i>); presented, and read the first time [Bill 184] ..	853
	[2.15.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, MARCH 1.

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment Bill (No. 10) — <i>Moved</i> , “That the Bill be now read 2 ^a ,”—(<i>The Lord Thurlow</i>) ..	854
After short debate, Motion agreed to :—Bill read 2 ^a accordingly.	
Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill (No. 13) — <i>Moved</i> , “That the Bill be now read 2 ^a ,”—(<i>The Lord Hobhouse</i>) ..	862
After short debate, Motion agreed to :—Bill read 2 ^a accordingly, and referred to a Select Committee.	
Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 7) — House again in Committee (according to order) ..	869
Amendments made :—The Report of the Amendments to be received on Tuesday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 34.)	
Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment Bill [<i>H.L.</i>].—Presented (<i>The Lord Bishop of Truro</i>); read 1 ^a (No. 33)	871
	[7.0.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MARCH 1.

Q U E S T I O N S.

POST OFFICE —HEAD POSTMASTERS—Question, <i>Mr. T. Blake</i> ; Answer, <i>The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)</i>	871
IRELAND —MR. FRANCIS MORRICE, SECRETARY TO THE GRAND JURY, CO. CLARE—FEES FROM ROAD CONTRACTORS—Question, <i>Mr. Cox</i> ; Answer, <i>The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)</i>	872
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) —“BOYCOTTING” MR. ALEXANDER WILSON, OF CASTLEWELLAN, CO. DOWN — Questions, <i>Colonel Waring, Mr. M'Cartan</i> ; Answers, <i>The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)</i>	873
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) —DYNAMITE OUTRAGE AT RESIDENCE OF MR. T. RICE HENN—Question, <i>Mr. Cox</i> ; Answer, <i>The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)</i>	873
HEALTH OF THE NAVY, 1885 —INSANITARY CONDITION OF WATER TANKS AT MALTA—Question, <i>Mr. Norton</i> ; Answer, <i>The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood)</i>	875
ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC —RECENT DISTURBANCES IN TONGA—Question, <i>Mr. W. H. James</i> ; Answer, <i>The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)</i>	875
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS —BOAT ACCOMMODATION ON PASSENGER SHIPS—Question, <i>Captain Price</i> ; Answer, <i>The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)</i>	876
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) —“THE QUEEN <i>v.</i> DILLON”—THE JURORS—Question, <i>Mr. Chance</i> ; Answer, <i>The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)</i>	876

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
[<i>March 1.</i>]	
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—“THE QUEEN <i>v.</i> DILLON”—THE SHORTHAND REPORT—Questions, Mr. Chance, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	877
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL QUARTER SESSIONS AT BALTINGLASS—Question, Mr. Byrne; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	877
TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS—CARDIFF BANK—PAYMENTS FROM THE EXCHEQUER—Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	878
ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—COUNTY INSPECTOR BROWRIGG—Questions, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	880
SLAVE TRAFFIC—EAST COAST OF AFRICA—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	880
CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS—OFFICIAL INFORMATION—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	881
WATER SUPPLY (METROPOLIS)—CHELSEA WATER COMPANY—Question, Colonel Dawnay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	881
WAR OFFICE—FORTIFICATION OF SINGAPORE—ARMAMENT—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	882
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFICIENCIES IN NAVAL GUNS AND AMMUNITION—Question, Sir William Plowden; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote)	882
VACCINATION—Question, Mr. T. Robinson; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	883
INDIA—MADRAS ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—EXCLUSION OF EUROPEAN ARTICLES—Question, Mr. Hoyle; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	883
PUBLIC MEETINGS (IRELAND)—Questions, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Dr. Tanner, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	884
NORTH SEA FISHERIES—THE FISHING BOAT “SKYLARK”—Question, Sir Savile Crossley; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	886
NORTH SEA FISHERIES CONVENTION—DAMAGES BY BELGIAN OWNERS—Question, Sir Savile Crossley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	886
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POSTAL SERVICE IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND—Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	887
BURMAH (UPPER)—THE MILITARY EXPEDITION—ALLEGED CRUELITIES—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	888
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE NEW CODE—Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	888
LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Lees; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	888
IRISH LAND COMMISSION—PURCHASERS OF GLEBE LANDS—Question, Mr. Reynolds; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	889
POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SECRETARY’S OFFICE—PROMOTION—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	889
HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE “BOX FUND”—Questions, Mr. O’Hea; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	890

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 1.]	Pag
IRISH PRISON SERVICE -- THE "INTERN OFFICERS" -- Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	891
BURIALS -- DISTURBANCE AT STRATFORD CEMETERY -- FUNERAL OF SIMON TWEED--Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Lionel Cohen; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	891
HARBOUR ACCOMMODATION COMMITTEE--Question, Mr. Marjoribanks; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	892
STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)--CHARING CROSS ROAD--Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	893
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881, AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885--Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	893
THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS--THE DAUNTSEY CHARITY--Question, Mr. Jesse Collings; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	893
PARLIAMENT--ORDER--BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)--THE ADJOURNED DEBATE -- Question, Mr. Courtney; Answer, Mr. Speaker	894
PARLIAMENT--THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE (1882)--RULE 2 (ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE)--	
LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)--	
Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"--(Mr. Howell)	895
After short debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE) -- RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)--RESOLUTION--ADJOURNED DEBATE [SIXTH NIGHT]--	
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on the Main Question [21st February], as amended:--Main Question, as amended, again proposed:--Debate <i>resumed</i>	916
Amendment proposed,	
In line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "arising out of the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House,"--(Mr. Sexton)	919
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted: "--After short debate, Question put:--The House <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 83, Noes 209; Majority 126.--(Div. List, No. 32.)	
After debate, Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words, "and opportunity afforded for Debate thereon,"--(Mr. Molloy)	929
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted,"--After debate, Question put:--The House <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 186, Noes 241; Majority 55.--(Div. List, No. 33.)	
Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "if no Amendment has been moved thereto,"--(Mr. Parnell)	960
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted," -- After short debate, Question put:--The House <i>divided</i> ; Ayes 116, Noes 302; Majority 186.--(Div. List, No. 34.)	
Amendment proposed,	
In line 1, by leaving out from the word "proposed," to the end of line 4, and inserting the words--"A Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate."--(Mr. William Henry Smith)	968

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 1.]

Page

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

Question proposed, "That the words 'a Motion may be made' stand part of the Question :"—After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be adjourned till To-morrow,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "To-morrow," in order to insert the word "Friday,"—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'To-morrow' stand part of the Question :"—After short debate, Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 110, Noes 243; Majority 133.—(Div. List, No. 35.)

Original Question again proposed

After short debate, Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 223, Noes 97; Majority 126.—(Div. List, No. 36.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to* :—Debate *adjourned* till To-morrow.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE—

Select Committee *nominated* :—List of the Committee

979
[1.45.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation Bill—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Dillwyn*) .. 980

After short debate, Bill to be read a second time To-morrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [SEVENTH NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Main Question, as amended :—Question again proposed, "That the words 'a Motion may be made' stand part of the Question :"—Debate *resumed* 980

After debate, Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 85, Noes 190; Majority 105.—(Div. List, No. 37.)

Question proposed,

"That the words 'A Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate' be there inserted,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) .. 993

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment,

After the word "Member," to insert the words "of the Government, or the Mover or Secondor of the Motion then in Debate, or the Mover or Secondor of an Amendment thereto,"—(*Mr. Leake*) 997

Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the proposed Amendment :"—After debate, Question put :—The House *divided*; Ayes 119, Noes 291; Majority 172.—(Div. List, No. 38.)

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "unless it shall appear to the Chair"—(*Mr. Whitbread*) .. 1020

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment :"—*Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) :—Motion *agreed to* :—Debate *adjourned* till Friday.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 2.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No 2)	
Bill [Bill 100]—	
<i>Moved</i> , “That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(<i>Mr. Anderson</i>) ..	1020
After short debate, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till <i>To-morrow</i> .	

M O T I O N S .

Bills of Exchange (Summary Judgment) Bill—Ordered (<i>Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Esslemont</i>); presented, and read the first time [Bill 185]	1022
Jurors' Detention Bill—Ordered (<i>Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Finlay, Mr. Baggallay</i>); presented, and read the first time [Bill 186]	1022
	[5.55.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, MARCH 3.

PRIVATE BILLS—

Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after *Friday the 24th day of June* next : [and other Orders] .. 1023

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—APPOINTMENT OF SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF CO. WATERFORD—Question, The Marquess of Ormonde ; Reply, Lord Brabourne 1023

Law of Evidence Amendment Bill (No. 23)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1024
Bill reported without Amendment ; and to be read 3^a *To-morrow*.

Church Patronage Bill (No. 26)—SECOND READING [ADJOURNED DEBATE]—

Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading read :—*Debate resumed accordingly* 1027
On Question, “That (‘now’) stand part of the Motion : ”—*Resolved in the affirmative* :—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday the 15th instant*. [7.15.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MARCH 3.

P R I V A T E B U S I N E S S .

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation Bill (by Order)—

Moved, “That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1050
After debate, Question put, and agreed to :—Bill read a second time, and committed.

Q U E S T I O N S .

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—TRIAL OF PETER WHITE AND OTHERS, CHARGED WITH MOBBIING AND RIOTING AT MOTHERWELL—Question, Mr. D. Crawford ; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald)	1059
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MR. JOHN REDINGTON, SUB-SHERIFF OF CO. GALWAY—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	1060

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 3.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
WAYS AND MEANS—COMMISSIONERS OF INLAND REVENUE—RETURN OF INCOME TAX—DIVIDEND WARRANTS OF RAILWAY COMPANIES—Question, Mr. Halsey; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1061
ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEER FORCE—THE CAPITATION GRANT—RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RECENT COMMITTEE—Question, Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1061
MERCANTILE MARINE—SHIPWRECKS ON THE GLAMORGANSHIRE COAST—COASTGUARD STATION AT SOUTHERNDOWN—Question, Mr. A. J. Williams; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	1062
INFLAMMATORY LANGUAGE (IRELAND)—SPEECH OF LORD ROSSMORE AT THE CAMLA ORANGE HALL, MONAGHAN—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	1063
POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—PRE-TRANSFER TELEGRAPH CLERKS—Question, Mr. H. S. Wright; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1063
POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS, "HOUSE OF COMMONS"—Questions, Sir Richard Paget, Mr. O'Hea; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1064
COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOL-KEEPING BY TEACHERS—Question, Mr. Leahy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	1065
ADMIRALTY—NAVAL LIEUTENANTS—RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONS IN TIME OF PEACE—Question, General Fraser; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1065
NAVY—THE DOCKYARDS—THE SHEERS AT PEMBROKE DOCKYARD—Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1066
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—THE TRIAL OF THE WALKERS—CHALLENGING THE JURY—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1066
STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)—CHARING CROSS STREET—THE NATIONAL GALLERY—Questions, Major Rasch, Sir Richard Paget, Mr. King-Harman; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket)	1067
PRISONS (GREAT BRITAIN)—PRISON LABOUR—MAT-MAKING—Question, Mr. Quilter; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)	1068
COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—TEACHERS—MR. JAMES A. IRWIN, CARRICKAWILKIN, CO. ARMAGH—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	1069
LAW AND POLICE—THE RECENT SOCIALIST DEMONSTRATIONS (METROPOLIS)—Question, Mr. Fisher; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	1069
POLICE CLOTHING—THE SYSTEM OF CONTRACTS—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	1070
ARMY (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—AMMUNITION, &C.—SOLID-DRAWN CART-RIDGE CASES—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote)	1071
ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE MILITIA (IRELAND)—SUPPLY OF MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1072

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 3.]

Page

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY—SUPPLY OF GUNS— Question, Mr. C. T. D. Acland; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1072
GUN LICENCES (IRELAND)—CASE OF JAMES MAYE, ARDEFINAN, CO. TIP- PERARY—Questions, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	1073
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—CASE OF JAMES CLERY, ARDMOYLE, CASHEL—CON- DUCT OF AN EMERGENCY MAN—Question, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks- Beach)	1073
FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—CARRIGAHOLT PIER, CO. CLARE —Question, Mr. Jordan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1074
LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE BILL—EXTENSION OF THE IMPOST TO THE METROPOLITAN AREA—Questions, Mr. Lionel Cohen, Mr. Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Sir Charles Palmer; An- swers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg)	1075
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—BANKERS' ACCOUNT OF THE MAC- ROOM BOARD OF GUARDIANS—TRANSFER OF ACCOUNT—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks- Beach)	1077
HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORTATION FROM GERMANY TO ENGLAND— Question, Mr. Whitmore; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1078
MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL—HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES—Question, Mr. Wiggin; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	1078
NAVY—THE DOCKYARDS—FATAL ACCIDENT AT PORTSMOUTH DOCKYARD— Question, Sir William Crossman; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1078
CENTRAL ASIA—REINFORCEMENT OF THE CHINESE GARRISONS IN TURKESTAN Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1079
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POST OFFICE AT WHITTY'S CROSS, CO. WEXFORD —Question, Mr. J. E. Redmond; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1079
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—THE BROOKE ESTATE, COOLGREANY—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	1080
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE CHALLONER SMITH COLLECTION OF MEZZOTINT ENGRAVINGS—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1080
AFRICA—THE GOLD COAST—CONTEMPLATED ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY ENGLAND—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	1081
ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—NOTICES ISSUED BY THE DEPUTY SHERIFF, Co. WATERFORD—Questions, Mr. P. J. Power; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)	1081
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—TELEGRAPHIC COM- MUNICATION BETWEEN WEXFORD AND ENNISCORTHY—Question, Mr. J. E. Redmond; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1082
NAVY—THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT—DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS—Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Childers; An- swers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1083
ARMY—RANK OF MEDICAL OFFICERS—Question, Sir Guyer Hunter; An- swer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1084

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
GREAT BRITAIN AND VENEZUELA—CESSATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS— PROTECTION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS—Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	1084
POST OFFICE—APPOINTMENTS TO POSTMASTERSHIPS—Question, Mr. Cony- beare; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1085
IRELAND—MORTGAGES AND CHARGES ON LANDED PROPERTY—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) ..	1086
NAVY—H.M.S. “BELLEISLE”—THE “BROAD ARROW AND MILITARY MAGAZINE”—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1087
LUNACY LAWS CONSOLIDATION BILL—INCORPORATION OF “THE IDIOTS’ ACT, 1886”—Question, Mr. Salt; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1087
LICHFIELD CHARITIES—LOWE’S CHARITY—Question, Sir John Swinburne; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1088
GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDS—INVESTMENT—Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) ..	1088
LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)—Questions, Mr. Howell, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1089

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY — *considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES, 1886-7)—

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

- (i.) Motion made, and Question proposed, “That a Supplementary sum, not exceed-
ing £30,960, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in
course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the
Constabulary Force in Ireland” 1090
- After long debate, *Moved*, “That the reduced sum, not exceeding £29,960, be
granted, &c.”—(Mr. John O’Connor, Tipperary :)—After further short debate,
Moved, “That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,”—
(Mr. Illingworth :)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.
Question again proposed, “That the reduced sum, not exceeding £29,960, be
granted, &c.”—(Mr. John O’Connor, Tipperary :)—After debate, Question put, and
negatived.
Original Question put, “That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £30,960, be
granted, &c. :”—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 246, Noes 121; Majority 125.—
(Div. List, No. 39.)

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

- Motion made, and Question proposed, “That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding
£10,560, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in
course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for
the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the
Establishments connected therewith” 1219
- Moved*, “That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,”—(Mr.
Labouchere :)—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*; Committee also report Progress;
to sit again *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS.

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)—MOTION FOR A SELECT
COMMITTEE—

Moved, “That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon certain
charges, brought under the notice of this House by Mr. Howell, Member for the
North East Division of Bethnal Green, and Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for the

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 3.]

Page

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)—Select Committee—*continued*.

Borough of Northampton, alleging improper use and malversation of public funds of the Corporation of London, by or with the consent of members and officials of such Corporation,"—(*Mr. Howell*) 1224

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they do take evidence on oath.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records,—(*Mr. Howell*.)

Intestates Estates Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Neville, Mr. Joseph Howard, Mr. Addison, Mr. T. P. O'Connor*) ; *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 187] .. 1226
[2.45.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, MARCH 4.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL—Personal Explanation, The Paymaster General (*Earl Beauchamp*) 1227

MALTA—ADDRESS FOR PAPERS—

Address for Papers on the Affairs of Malta, especially those relating to the Government of Malta,"—(*The Earl De La Warr*) .. 1227

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

IRELAND—THE JURY LAWS—Question, Observations, Lord Fitzgerald:—
Short debate thereon 1234

EGYPT—THE NATIVE EGYPTIAN ARMY—MOTION FOR A PAPER—

Moved for—

"Despatch addressed to Sir H. Drummond Wolff by Lieutenant-Colonel Parr from the headquarters of the Egyptian Army at Cairo, dated 17th January, 1886, in reference to the efficiency and gallantry of the native Egyptian troops, and the friendly relations now existing between the English officers serving in the army of the Khedive and the native officers and men,"—(*The Earl of Harrowby*) .. 1253

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

WALES (CHURCH OF ENGLAND)—REVENUE FROM ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY— MOTION FOR A RETURN—

Moved for—

"Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the bishops, chapters, archdeacons, &c., in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales,"—(*The Earl of Powis*) .. 1253

Motion *agreed to*:—Return *ordered* to be laid before the House.

Law of Evidence Amendment Bill (No. 23)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^d,"—(*The Lord Bramwell*) .. 1254

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Denman*)

On Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion? *Resolved* in the Affirmative:—Bill read 3^d accordingly; and *passed*, and sent to the Commons:

Protest, Lord Denman 1255
[7.15.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, MARCH 4.

QUESTIONS.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881—AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1881-1886—
Question, Mr. Hobhouse; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (*Lord John Manners*) 1256

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — MEDALS FOR VOLUNTEER NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS—Question, Baron Dimsdale; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. E. Stanhope*), ... 1257

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 4.]

Page

INDIA (RAILWAYS)—BENGAL-NAGPUR RAILWAY—Question, Dr. Tanner ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	1257
“POST OFFICE PATRONAGE”—SUB-OFFICE, BUTE STREET, CARDIFF—Questions, Dr. Tanner ; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1258
MERCANTILE MARINE—LICENCES FOR FOREIGN PILOTS—Question, Dr. Tanner ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1258
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—DELIVERY BETWEEN DRUMLISH AND FARNAUGHT, CO. LEITRIM—Question, Mr. Hayden ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1259
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—PROCLAMATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1259
MERCHANDISE MARKS ACTS—CONSOLIDATION—Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Lees ; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1259
DOGS—LIABILITY FOR SHOOTING STRAY DOGS—Question, Mr. McLaren ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	1260
POOR LAW—LAW OF SETTLEMENT AND REMOVAL—Question, Mr. Llewellyn ; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	1261
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SUPERSESSION OF SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF WATERFORD CO.—Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1261
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS—THE PRIVY COUNCIL—Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1262
HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES—THE WALTHAM WATCH MANUFACTURING COMPANY—Question, Mr. Kimber ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1262
ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRAWLING, 1885—Question, Mr. E. W. Beckett ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1263
GLEBE LAND PURCHASERS (IRELAND)—Question, Lord Ernest Hamilton ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1264
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH EXTENSION, CO. DONEGAL—Question, Lord Ernest Hamilton ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1265
VACCINATION—CUMULATIVE PENALTIES—CASE OF CHARLES HAYWARD—Question, Mr. Bradlaugh ; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	1265
MAURITIUS—SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY—Questions, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Dr. Tanner ; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) ..	1266
NAVY—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES AND SWORD-BAYONETS—H.M.S. “ACORN”—Question, Mr. Hanbury ; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1266
VACCINATION—MR. ROBERT KING, EVINGTON—Question, Mr. Picton ; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	1267
IRELAND—THE “DEATH DUTIES” ON LAND IN ULSTER—Question, Mr. O’Doherty ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	1267
POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—APPOINTMENT OF MEDICAL OFFICERS—Question, Mr. Pickersgill ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1268
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—BELFAST AND CO. DOWN RAILWAY COMPANY—Question, Mr. M’Cartan ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1268

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 4.]	Pag
IRELAND — SUBORNATION OF INFORMATION — HEAD-CONSTABLE MAURICE O'HALLORAN—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1269
THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—MR. GEORGE FYDELL ROWLEY, HIGH SHERIFF OF RUTLANDSHIRE—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	1270
VACCINATION — INQUIRY BY THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY — Questions, Sir Charles Russell; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ..	1270
RAILWAYS (INDIA)—BORROWING POWERS — LEGISLATION — Question, Mr. Lionel Cohen; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	1272
GRANTS TO THE ROYAL FAMILY—A SELECT COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1272
IMPERIAL INSTITUTE BUILDINGS — THE COMPETITION — Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1273
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881, AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1273
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1274
RIGHT OF PUBLIC MEETING (ENGLAND AND IRELAND)—THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN — SUPPRESSION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS — Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) ..	1274

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [EIGHTH NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended:—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment:—Debate resumed ..	1275
After long debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 177, Noes 130; Majority 47.—(Div. List, No. 40.)	
Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, line 4, leave out "an abuse of the Rules of the House or,"—(Mr. O'Doherty.) ..	1324
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."	
After short debate, Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "or an infringement of the rights of the minority,"—(Mr. Whitbread.)	
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said proposed Amendment:—After debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 275, Noes 200; Majority 75.	
Division List, Ayes and Noes ..	1349
Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, after the word "minority," to insert the words "in respect of Debate, or otherwise,"—(Mr. Parnell.) ..	1355
Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the said proposed Amendment:—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 107; Noes 226; Majority 119.—(Div. List, No. 42.)	
Question again proposed,	
"That the words 'A Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 4.]

Page

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

- of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate' be there inserted,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) .. 1360
- Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Labouchere*):—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate adjourned till *Tuesday* next.

MOTIONS.

—o—

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

- Moved*, "That a Select Committee be appointed to reconsider the plans and proposals for an Admiralty and War Office:—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may with advantage be retained,"—(*Mr. Plunket*) 1360
- After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER OF SUPPLY—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1361

Rivers Pollution Prevention Act (1876) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Thorburn, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Laing Brown*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 188] 1362 [1.35.]

LORDS, MONDAY, MARCH 7.

- CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS—Question, The Earl of Kimberley; Answer, The Lord Privy Seal (Earl Cadogan) 1362
- GLEBE LANDS BILL—Question, The Archbishop of Canterbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) 1362
- HORSE BREEDING AND SUPPLY FOR MILITARY AND INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES—Observations, Lord Ribblesdale; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris):—Short debate thereon 1363 [6.0.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, MARCH 7.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

Clyde Navigation Bill [Lords]—

- Moved*, "That the Bill be now taken into Consideration,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1381
- After short debate, Bill, as amended, to be considered *To-morrow*.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

- POOR LAW ELECTIONS (IRELAND)—RETURNING OFFICERS, COOKHILL UNION—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) 1381
- IRISH LAND COMMISSION—THE LAND COURT—FAIR RENTS—Questions, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) .. 1382
- EDUCATION—LOCAL COLLEGES IN ENGLAND AND WALES—Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) .. 1383

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 7.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND) ACT—ENNIS UNION—Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1384
PRISONS BOARD (IRELAND)—RICHMOND BRIDEWELL, DUBLIN—Questions, Mr. Conway, Mr. H. J. Gill, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1385
FISHERIES (IRELAND)—BOAT-SLIP AT FANAD POINT, DONEGAL—Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1386
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—ACTION OF THE POLICE—Questions, Mr. Blane; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1386
THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—COUNTY INSPECTOR BROWNRIGG— Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1387
ROYAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE IN IRELAND—EVICTIONS—Questions, Mr. O'Kelly; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes); Question, Mr. Conybeare [No reply] ..	1388
EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—LORD KINGSTON'S ESTATES, CO. ROSCOMMON—Ques- tion, Mr. O'Kelly; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1389
NATIONAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND)—REMOVAL OF INSPECTORS—Question, Mr. Mac Neill; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1389
INDIA—COLLECTION OF REVENUE—MAGISTERIAL POWERS—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	1390
INDIA (MADRAS)—MR. H. E. SULLIVAN, COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE— Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) ..	1390
ADMIRALTY—DEVONPORT DOCKYARD—THE FIRE-BRIGADE STAFF—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1391
NAVY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT)—NORDENFELT GUNS—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1391
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT—TRANSFER OF BRITISH SHIPS TO FOREIGN OWNERS—Question, Mr. T. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1392
THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—BATTERSEA PARK—Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	1392
THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—THE O'DONNELLAN BLAKE FORSTER, J.P.— Question, Colonel Saunderson; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1393
VACCINATION ACTS—MR. R. KING, EVINGTON—Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	1393
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—CHALLENGES IN CRIMINAL CASES—"QUEEN <i>v.</i> GARTLAND AND M'KENNA"—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1394
POST OFFICE—HEAD POSTMASTERSHIPS—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; An- swer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) ..	1394
TRADE AND MANUFACTURE—FRENCH PROHIBITION OF ENGLISH LEATHER— Questions, Mr. Lafone, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	1395
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—NATIONAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS—THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE—Question, Sir Henry Roscoe; An- swer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	1396
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—FEGGS—Questions, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Henry Tyler; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) ..	1397

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—DONEGAL AND TYRONE MILITIA—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick)	1398
ARMY (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—INSPECTOR OF SADDLERY AT WOOLWICH—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote)	1399
THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL—DISALLOWANCE OF EXPENSES FOR THE EGYPTIAN ARMY—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1399
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—PAYMENT BY RESULT—EXAMINATIONS—Question, Mr. W. Cavendish Bentinck; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	1400
POST OFFICE—THE SECRETARY TO THE POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1400
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—MONAGHAN ASSIZES—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes); Question, Dr. Tanner [No reply]	1401
SOUTH AMERICA—BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA—THE BOUNDARY LINE Questions, Mr. Watt, Mr. Staveley Hill; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1402
POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK—DEPUTATION OF CLERKS—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1403
CENTRAL ASIA—TRADE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THIBET AND INDIA—Question, Mr. G. W. Balfour; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1404
SALMON FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—LEGISLATION—Questions, Mr. Mark Stewart, Dr. Clark; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald)	1405
THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—REGENT'S PARK—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket)	1405
BURMAH—ALLEGED BARBARITIES—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	1406
POST OFFICE—STAMPED TELEGRAPH CARDS—Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1406
HOUSE OF COMMONS—MEMBERS' SMOKING ROOM—Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket)	1407
ADMIRALTY—NAVAL GUNS AND AMMUNITION—PAPERS AND CORRESPONDENCE—Question, Sir William Plowden; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1407
ADMIRALTY—SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1408
PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Craig Sellar; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1409
THE EXECUTIVE (IRELAND)—THE NEW CHIEF SECRETARY—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1409
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"THE QUEEN <i>v.</i> DILLON"—SAFETY OF THE DISSENTING JURORS—Question, Colonel Saunderson; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1410
PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1410

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7)—

(In the Committee.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[March 7.]

Page

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7)—Committee—continued.

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

- (1.) £10,560, Supplementary, Science and Art Department for the United Kingdom.
—After debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1412
- (2.) £23,900, Supplementary, Public Education, Ireland.—After debate, *Vote*
Vote agreed to .. 1441

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

- (3.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £16,785, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad" .. 1457
- Moved*, "That the Item of £7,800 (Telegrams), be reduced by the sum of £3,000,"—
(*Mr. Labouchere* :)—After short debate, Question put :—The Committee *divided* ;
Ayes 91, Noes 140 ; Majority 49.—(Div. List, No. 43.)
- Original Question again proposed .. 1461
- Moved*, "That the Item of £7,000 (Special Missions and Services) be reduced by the sum of £6,190,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh* :)—After debate, Question put :—The Committee *divided* ; Ayes 146, Noes 234 ; Majority 88.
- Division List, Ayes and Noes .. 1500
- Original Question again proposed .. 1503
- Moved*, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,975, be granted, &c.,"—
(*Dr. Tanner* :)—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived* :—Original Question put, and *agreed to*.
- (4.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £9,050, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Expenses of Various Services (other than Consular) in connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Expenses of the Liberated African Department" .. 1504
- After short debate, *Moved*, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £6,550, be granted, &c.,"—(*Mr. Dillon* :)—Question put, and *negatived* :—Original Question put, and *agreed to*.
- (5.) £1,500, Supplementary, Colonies, Grants in Aid.—After short debate, *Vote*
agreed to .. 1515

CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES.

- (6.) £11,254, Supplementary, Superannuations and Retired Allowances.—After short debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1517
- (7.) £157, Supplementary, Pauper Lunatics, Scotland.—After short debate, *Vote*
agreed to .. 1519

CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

- (8.) £1,000, Adelaide Exhibition.—After short debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1519
- (9.) £9,306, "Telegrafo" Claims.—After short debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1522
- (10.) £147, Treasury Chest Robbery.—After short debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1529
- Moved*, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Edmund Robertson* :)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

- (11.) £236,000, Supplementary, Post Office.—After short debate, *Vote agreed to* .. 1532
- (12.) £122,000, Supplementary, Post Office Telegraphs.—After short debate, *Vote*
agreed to .. 1543

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow* ; Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday*.

First Offenders Bill [Bill 132]—

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Howard Vincent* :)—Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill *considered in Committee*, and reported : to be *printed*, as amended [Bill 189] ; re-committed for *Monday next* .. 1544

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Bill [Bill 153]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Dr. Cameron*) .. 1544

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Colonel Hughes* :)—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question again proposed .. 1546

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 7.]

Page

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Bill—continued.

After short debate, *Moved*, “That the Debate be now adjourned,”—
(*Viscount Cranborne* :)—After further short debate, Question put :—The
House *divided* ; Ayes 112, Noes 100 ; Majority 12.—(Div. List, No. 45 :)
Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday*.

COUNTY COURTS [EXPENSES]—

Considered in Committee	..	..	..	.. 1551
Resolution <i>agreed to</i> ; to be reported <i>To-morrow</i> .				

M O T I O N .

Parliamentary Elections (Seamen's Vote) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Atkinson, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Baden-Powell, Mr. Grotrian, Mr. Thomas Sutherland, Mr. Ewart, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. King, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck*) ; presented, and read the first time [Bill 190]

.. 1551
[2.40]

LORDS, TUESDAY, MARCH 8.

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [H.L.]—

Select Committee <i>nominated</i> :—List of the Committee	..	..	.. 1551
			[4.30.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MARCH 8.

P R I V A T E B U S I N E S S .

Clyde Navigation Bill [Lords] (*by Order*)—

Moved, “That the Bill, as amended, be now considered,”—(*Sir Charles Forster*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word “now,” in order to add the words “upon this day six months,”—(*Colonel Malcolm*,)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, “That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question :”
—After short debate, Question put :—The House *divided* ; Ayes 200,
Noes 100 ; Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 46.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill to be read the third time.

Q U E S T I O N S .

TRADE AND COMMERCE—OFFICIAL RETURNS OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS—
Question, Mr. Howard Vincent ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board
of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)

.. 1571

GENERAL ELECTION, 1886—CHARGES OF RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND)—
Question, Dr. Clark ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the
Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)

.. 1572

VACCINATION ACTS—CASE OF JAMES BAMFORD—Question, Mr. Picton ; An-
swer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)

1573

ADULTERATION ACTS—LICENSED VICTUALLERS—WESTMINSTER—Question,
Mr. J. G. Talbot ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home
Department (Mr. Matthews)

.. 1574

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN ENGLAND—SCOTCH CASES—“*Jones v. Scottish
Accident Insurance Company*”—Question, Sir Robert Fowler ; Answer,
The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster)

.. 1574

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 8.]

Page

PRISONS (IRELAND)—SALARIES OF OFFICIALS—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1575
LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE BILL—Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) ..	1575
MERCHANT SHIPPING—STEAM TUG OFF MUMBLES HEAD—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1576
LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACTS—LABOURERS' COTTAGES, CO. LIMERICK—Question, Mr. William Abraham (Limerick, W.); Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1577
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—ABDUCTION OF ETHEL ROE—Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. H. J. Gill, Mr. M'Cartan; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1577
CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE—Questions, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	1578
BANKRUPTCY COURT (IRELAND)—UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS—Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1579
FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—THE TRAWLING AT BALLANTRAE, Ayrshire—Question, Mr. Vernon; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) ..	1580
MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL—Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) ..	1581
THE CURRENCY—HALF-SOVEREIGNS—Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ..	1581
ROYAL COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS—COMPULSORY RETIREMENTS—Question, Mr. Menzies; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) ..	1582
WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—CONTRACT FOR CARTRIDGES FOR QUEENSLAND—Questions, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. De Lisle; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) ..	1582
ARMY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENTS)—STEEL FOR PROJECTILES AT ROYAL LABORATORY—Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	1583
EDUCATION (SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT)—REGULATIONS AS TO DRAWING—Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) ..	1584
EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—CARRICKMACROSS UNION—Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) ..	1585
ARMY ESTIMATES—DIVISION INTO ANNUAL AND PERMANENT—Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	1585
THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—COMMISSIONS TO THE ARMY AND NAVY—Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	1586
THE EXHIBITION OF 1851—LANDED PROPERTY HELD BY THE COMMISSIONERS—AMOUNT MORTGAGED TO GREENWICH HOSPITAL—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1586
THE CONTRACT SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY—THE ROYAL COMMISSION—IRREGULAR PUBLICATION OF EVIDENCE—Question, Mr. Byron Reed; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) ..	1587
TRADE AND COMMERCE—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUGAR BOUNTIES—Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	1589

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 8.]	Page
THE PUBLIC SERVICE—RETIRED PAY OR PENSIONS—THE RETURN—Questions, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1589
POST OFFICE—PARCEL POST TO NEW ZEALAND—Question, Mr. Godson; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1590
METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—CONDEMNED BUILDINGS IN WHITECHAPEL—Question, Lord Henry Bruce; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg)	1590
CUSTOMS (IRELAND)—OUTDOOR OFFICERS—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1591
TITHE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1591
PARLIAMENT—RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1592
SUPPLY—SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7—THE ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1592

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [NINTH NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended:—Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted:—"— <i>Debate resumed</i>	1593
After debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 160, Noes 70; Majority 90.—(Div. List, No. 47.)	
Amendment proposed, to leave out from the first word "When," in line 5, to the word "Chair," in line 9, both inclusive,—(<i>Mr. Parnell</i>)	1621
Question proposed,	
"That the words 'When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made,' stand part of the Question"	
After debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 281, Noes 105; Majority 176.—(Div. List, No. 48.)	
Amendment proposed,	
In line 7, to leave out the words "the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained," in order to insert the words "the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld,"—(<i>Mr. William Henry Smith</i>)	1647
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:—"— <i>Moved</i> , "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(<i>Dr. Clark</i>):—Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 94, Noes 292; Majority 198.—(Div. List, No. 49.)	
Original Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:—"—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 67; Noes 267; Majority 200.—(Div. List, No. 50.)	
Question proposed, "That the words, 'The assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld,' be there inserted:—"—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 244, Noes 78; Majority 166.—(Div. List, No. 51.)	
Main Question, as amended, again proposed	1658
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(<i>Mr. Dillwyn</i>):—After short debate, Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 93; Noes 229; Majority 136.—(Div. List, No. 52.)	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 8.]

Page

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—continued.

Main Question, as amended, again proposed	..	1661
Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(<i>Mr. Healy</i> :)—Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> :—Debate adjourned till <i>To-morrow</i> .		
SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolutions [7th March] reported	..	1664
Resolutions 1 to 10, inclusive, agreed to.		
Resolution 11 read a first and second time :—After short debate, Resolution agreed to.		
Remaining Resolution agreed to.		
COUNTY COURTS [EXPENSES]—		
Resolution [7th March] reported	..	1664
After short debate, Resolution agreed to.	[2.0.]	

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

<i>Dublin Southern District Tramways Bill</i> [<i>Repayment of Deposit</i>]—		
Resolution considered in Committee	..	1665
Resolution agreed to; to be reported <i>To-morrow</i> .		

QUESTION.

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)—Question, <i>Mr. Bradlaugh</i> ; Answer, <i>The First Lord of the Treasury</i> (<i>Mr. W. H. Smith</i>)..	1665
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ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [TENTH NIGHT]—	
Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Main Question, as amended :—Question again proposed :—Debate resumed	1666
Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the words "any Question already," in order to insert the words "the Question last previously,"—(<i>Mr. Arthur O'Connor</i>),—instead thereof	1670
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :"—After debate, Question put :—The House divided ; Ayes 170, Noes 109 ; Majority 61.—(<i>Div. List</i> , No. 53.)	
After short debate, Amendment proposed, in line 9, to leave out, after the word "Chair," to the word "such," in line 11,—(<i>Mr. Sexton</i> .)	1685
Question proposed, "That the words 'and also if a clause be then under consideration' stand part of the Question :"—After further debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(<i>Mr. Parnell</i> :)—After further short debate, Question put, and agreed to :—Debate adjourned till <i>Friday</i> .	

[5.50.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, MARCH 10.

<i>Junacy Acts Amendment Bill</i> (No. 34)—	
Amendments reported (according to Order)	1705
Moved, "That the Report of Amendments be agreed to,"—(<i>The Lord Chancellor</i> :)—After short debate, Motion agreed to :—Further Amendments made :—Bill to be printed, as amended ; and to be read 3 ^d on <i>Thursday</i> next.	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 10.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
Glebe Lands Bill (No. 16)—	
House in Committee (according to Order)	1706
Amendments made : The Report thereof to be received on <i>Monday</i> next ; and Bill to be <i>printed</i> , as amended. (No. 41.)	
Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment Bill (No. 33)—	
<i>Moved</i> , "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill,"—(<i>The Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe</i>)	1715
Motion <i>agreed to</i> :—House in Committee accordingly ; Amendments made : the Report thereof to be received <i>To-morrow</i> .	
Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Act (1886) Amendment Bill [H.L.]— <i>Presented</i> (<i>The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos</i>) ; read 1 ^a (No. 39) ..	1716
	[7.0.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MARCH 10.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

<i>Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Various Powers) Bill—</i>	
Postponement of Motion, Mr. Houldsworth	1716

QUESTIONS.

—o—

SCOTLAND—REGISTER HOUSE, EDINBURGH — SEARCHES OF INCUMBRANCES— Question, Mr. Wallace ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1717
COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—MR. L. H. JAMES, OFFICIAL ASSIGNEE —Question, Mr. P. M'Donald ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1718
DOVER HARBOUR BOARD—THE ACCOUNTANTS—Question, Major Dickson ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	1718
EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—MR. EDMOND DAVOREN, KILMALLOCK — Questions, Mr. Finucane, Mr. T. M. Healy ; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1719
INLAND REVENUE—THE "DEATH DUTIES" ON LAND IN ULSTER — Ques- tion, Mr. O'Doherty ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1720
SOUTH AMERICA—BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA—THE BOUNDARY— Question, Mr. Staveley Hill ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1721
AFRICA (EAST COAST)—RUMOURED ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY — Question, Mr. Richard ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1721
SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT—THE PATENT MUSEUM—Question, Mr. J. Chamberlain ; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	1722
GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDS—INVESTMENTS—Question, Sir Samuel Wilson ; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) ..	1722
ARMY—RETIREMENT OF COMMANDING OFFICERS—Question, General Fraser ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) ..	1723
METROPOLIS — FOREIGN LABOUR IN EAST LONDON — Questions, Captain Colomb ; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms)	1724

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 10.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
ALIEN ACTS—IMMIGRATION OF DESTITUTE ALIENS—Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1724
ARMY (INDIA)—MEDICAL STAFF—BRIGADE SURGEON WILLIAM GRAVES—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1725
WAR OFFICE—BURSTING OF RIFLED GUNS—THE RETURN—Question, Sir John Dorington; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1725
PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875—ASSESSMENT OF ALLOTMENT GARDENS—Question, Sir Frederick Mappin; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	1726
NORTH SEA LIQUOR TRAFFIC—THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE—Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1726
DUCHY OF LANCASTER—LEASES OF LAND IN YORKSHIRE—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners)	1726
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—JURY PANEL OF CO. MONAGHAN—Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1727
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CASES OF JOHN M'NULTY AND OTHERS (THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN)—Question, Mr. Kennedy; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1728
POOR LAW—EMIGRATION OF CHILDREN TO CANADA—Question, Mr. Rankin; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	1729
CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—EDUCATION SCHEMES—Questions, Mr. Rankin; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	1730
INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—ALLOWANCE TO COLLIERY PROPRIETORS—Question, Mr. Brooke Robinson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1731
ARMY—PROMOTION OF STAFF PAYMASTERS—Question, Colonel Duncan; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1731
POST OFFICE—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LETTER CARRIERS—Question, Major Ross; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1732
CENTRAL ASIA—RUSSIAN RAILWAY BY THE CASPIAN SEA—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1733
POST OFFICE—TELEGRAPH INSPECTORSHIP AT LIVERPOOL—Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1733
LUNACY LAWS—ALLEGED CONFINEMENT OF A SANE WOMAN—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie)	1734
THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—A REVIEW—Question, Sir Henry Fletcher; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1735
CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1887-8—FEES TO LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN—Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1735
ARMY—COMMISSIONS—STANDARD OF VISUAL ACUTENESS—Question, Sir Guyer Hunter; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1736
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE FORTHCOMING CODE, ARTICLES 114, 109—Question, Mr. Kenyon; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)	1736
POST OFFICE CONTRACTS—CONVEYANCE BETWEEN MULLINGAR AND BALLYMAHON—Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes)	1737

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 10]

Page

IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS—THE CONFERENCE IN LONDON— Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland)	1737
ARMY (INDIA)—MADRAS—ARMY CLOTHING CONTRACTS—Question, Mr. Hoyle; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst)	1738
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE CHALLONER SMITH COLLECTION OF MEZZOTINT ENGRAVINGS—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)	1739
ADMIRALTY (KINGSTOWN)—THE GUARDSHIP “BELLEISLE”—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1739
THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE MAGISTRACY OF FLINT- SHIRE—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	1740
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—COAL MINES REGULATION BILL—Question, Mr. D. Crawford; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Depart- ment (Mr. Matthews)	1740
QUEEN’S PLATES (IRELAND)—Question, Colonel Nolan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes)	1741
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS—EXAMINATIONS FOR CLERK OF WORKS UNDER THE BOARD OF WORKS—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket)	1741
MOZAMBIQUE—PROTECTION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS—H.M.S. “REINDEER” —Question, Mr. A. E. Pease; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1741
AFRICA (WEST COAST)—MR. H. H. JOHNSTON, HER MAJESTY’S VICE CONSUL—Question, Mr. A. E. Pease; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)	1742
GAME LAWS—SALE OF A HARE WITHOUT LICENCE—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews)	1743
WAR OFFICE—THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SMALL ARMS FACTORY, ENFIELD LOCK—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)	1743
ADMIRALTY—SALE OF CONFIDENTIAL DRAWINGS, &c. IN CHATHAM DOCK- YARD—Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. P. O’Brien; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton)	1744
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE SCHOOLS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON— SURPLUS OF EXHIBITION OF 1851—Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1745
CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—ACQUITTALS AT THE TYRONE WINTER ASSIZES—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. P. O’Brien; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1745
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881, AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885—Questions, Mr. P. O’Brien, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1748
THE IRISH LAND QUESTION—LEGISLATION—Questions, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1748
THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith)	1749

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[<i>March 10.</i>]	<i>Page</i>
LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—CLARE ASSIZES—Questions, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Murphy; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ..	1750
BULGARIA—THE RECENT OUTBREAK—USE OF TORTURE ON THE CAPTURED INSURGENTS—Question, Lord Elcho; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) ..	1752
PARLIAMENT—ORDER—WITHDRAWAL OF A QUESTION FROM THE NOTICE PAPER—Observations, Question, Mr. E. Harrington; Answer, Mr. Speaker; Observations, Mr. T. W. Russell; Question, Mr. P. O'Brien [No reply]	1752
PARLIAMENT—THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS—WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)	1754

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—considered in Committee—ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE)— (In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £459,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, to meet additional Expenditure for Army Services" ..	1755
After debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £150,000, for deficiency in Appropriations in Aid, be omitted,"—(<i>Sir George Campbell</i> :)—After further debate, Question put :—The Committee divided; Ayes 96, Noes 149; Majority 53.—(Div. List, No. 54.)	
Original Question again proposed ..	1822
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £35,000, for Pay of Ordnance Store Subordinate Establishment, and Wages, be omitted,"—(<i>Dr. Tanner</i> :)—After short debate, Question put, and <i>negatived</i> .	
Original Question again proposed ..	1828
After short debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £30,000, Instalment of £110,000, Payment for the Brennan Torpedo, be omitted,"—(<i>Sir William Crossman</i> :)—After further short debate, <i>Moved</i> , "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair,"—(<i>Mr. Storey</i> :)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> :—Amendment, by leave, <i>withdrawn</i> .	
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £60,000, Wages, under 'Vote 12, be omitted,"—(<i>Mr. Storey</i> :)—Question put :—The Committee divided; Ayes 101, Noes 194; Majority 93.—(Div. List, No. 55.)	
Original Question again proposed ..	1834
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £44,000, Charges in Egypt, under Vote 13, be omitted,"—(<i>Mr. Storey</i> :)—After debate, Question put :—The Committee divided; Ayes 113, Noes 213; Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 56.)	
Original Question again proposed ..	1849
<i>Moved</i> , "That the Item of £30,000, Instalment of £110,000, Payment for the Brennan Torpedo, be omitted,"—(<i>Mr. Labouchere</i> :)—After debate, Question put :—The Committee divided; Ayes 77, Noes 192; Majority 115.—(Div. List, No. 57.)	
Original Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> .	

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow*; Committee to sit again *To-morrow*.

Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension Bill [Bill 171]

<i>Moved</i> , "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(<i>Sir John Lubbock</i>) ..	1868
After short debate, Question put, and <i>agreed to</i> :—Bill read a second time, and committed for <i>Monday next</i> .	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

[March 10.]

Page

MOTIONS.

—o—

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION)—

Ordered, That the Select Committee do consist of Five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That Two Members of the House, to be named by the Committee of Selection, be appointed to propose and examine witnesses, but without the power of voting,—
(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Criminal Law (Costs) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Milvain, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Molloy*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 191] 1870

Vagrant Act Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. C. Dyke Acland, Mr. Caine, Mr. Harry Davenport, Sir Robert Fowler, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Henry Wilson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 192] 1870
[1.35.]

COMMONS.

—o—

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21.

Burnley—John Slagg, esquire.

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.]

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 18th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—
Church Patronage* (26).
Third Reading—Appellate Jurisdiction (25),
and passed.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON WARLIKE
STORES—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS AND
STORES.

MOTION FOR RETURNS.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY, in rising
to move—

“That there be laid before this House Returns of the schedule of complaints and defects printed by the War Office for the use of the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores; now sitting, as to the weapons and stores supplied for the use of Her Majesty's Navy,”

said, that he wished to explain in a few words why he had ventured to bring this subject under the attention of their Lordships. In the case of the Army and

Navy it was extremely important that when great questions were at issue as to their efficiency it should not be supposed that those questions were treated merely as between experts. Those matters were of great importance and interest to the public; and he thought it was well, when deficiencies were discovered or apprehended, that they should show an interest in them as well as the professional class. The reason why he moved for the Return was that the answer that had been given by his noble Friend (Lord Elphinstone), on the part of the Government last week, to his Question as to the defective armament of certain ships was of a startling and an alarming character. Having recapitulated the statement made as to the numbers of cutlasses and sword bayonets that were found to be defective on being tested on board the ships of the Training Squadron, the noble Lord said that the statement was so startling that he followed it up by inquiring whether there had been any complaints of previous defects of a

like kind, and the reply given was that there had been previous complaints, and that a Schedule of them had been printed by the War Office, and was in the hands of the Commission. There could not be a safer or a wiser policy than to give the public complete information on such matters. He would be the last to press for the Return if the noble Lord who represented the War Office thought it would be undesirable in the public interests to give it while the Commission was sitting; but he thought that the moment when questions were raised as to the condition of weapons in actual use was the time when good service might be done by a statement of the fears which disturbed the public mind. He had the most perfect confidence in those at the head of the Admiralty and the War Department; he was satisfied that, with their ability, judgment, and courage, the great interests of the Services were safe in their hands, and he would not breathe a word of suspicion against their administration. All he desired to do was to assist them in getting at the bottom of the complaints made. The reply to which he had referred had, however, given rise to profound uneasiness as to the condition of the weapons in use in the Fleet generally; and while the Commissioners were looking to the future supply of weapons, he ventured to put a Question to the Admiralty with regard to weapons at present in use. They ought to be informed whether the weapons that had been formerly complained of were still on board our ships, or whether they had been discarded and sent away from the ships. He would ask whether the Admiralty would direct that all weapons on board ships in commission should be tested forthwith, for, after the revelations that had been made, it would be wrong to leave untested weapons in the hands of our sailors and Marines? It was stated that nobody connected with the ships was responsible for the proper condition of the weapons in use upon them; and, therefore, some assurance ought to be given that no weapons could be passed into the hands of our men without being tested. The noble Lord said the other night—

“We give patterns of the weapons we wish for; but we have no means of knowing whether the weapons we receive are according to pattern.”

The Earl of Harrowby

That was an unfortunate state of things as far as the Admiralty was concerned, and he should have thought it would have necessitated the testing of the weapons by the War Office before they were issued. He hoped that every complaint would be brought to light, and that the Commission would put the country in possession of the facts in each case. The country would not be satisfied unless it knew the answer to the complaints that had been made. Another point of essential importance was that the Commission should get to the bottom of the fact as to who was responsible for the issue of these inferior weapons; whether they were supplied by contract; if so, whether the contract had been broken in the first instance, and, if it had, whose fault it was; whether the patterns supplied by the Admiralty had been accurately copied? Many of them remembered the shoddy boots, the trusses of hay stuffed with rubbish, and the wretched beds supplied during the Crimean War, and they should insist upon the fullest inquiry into the action of the contractors. Again, there should be the fullest inquiry as to whether there had been any foul play on the part of the officers connected with the Department. They hoped that there had been no foul play; but they knew that in other countries beside our own such a state of things had existed. They had a right to know whether this was the case in the Public Services. It was also very necessary to know whether the officers responsible for the supply of these arms ever delegated their duties, for which they received pay, to inferior officers who were not really responsible to the Department; whether officers of high position had not, in some cases, made themselves not responsible, and had allowed officers of a lower grade to pass the weapons. These were points that ought to be thoroughly investigated. Another question for consideration was whether the weapons were inferior because the War Office did not pay enough for them; then let the fact be known, for it would be better to pay more for a good article. It was a disastrous and cruel policy to place untrustworthy weapons in the hands of our soldiers and sailors. Whether the issue of defective weapons could be traced to political action of any kind, such as the demand of the Chancellor of the Exchequer

of the day that there should be sweeping economies without reference to their wisdom or safety; and whether we were now paying the penalty for the popularity-hunting of past Ministers. He hoped that their Lordships would insist upon the responsibility for these culpable or criminal deeds being brought home to individuals, and that those individuals should be treated with no sparing hand. He knew nothing more criminal than knowingly to allow men to fight for their country with unreliable weapons. The investigation of this matter ought not to be allowed to drift into recriminations between different classes of officers; or between one Party and another; and civilians should be backed up by the Ministers of the day in efforts to get at the bottom of these abuses, which made us all ashamed of our country.

Moved, That there be laid before this House—

“Return of the schedule of complaints and defects printed by the War Office for the use of the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores now sitting, as to the weapons and stores supplied for the use of Her Majesty's Navy.”—(*The Earl of Harrowby.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (LORD HARRIS) said, he must express a hope that the noble Earl would consent to withdraw the Motion he had made, and he thought there were good reasons for making that request of him. The fact was that all the questions that had been raised in the speech of the noble Earl were at that moment being carefully considered by the Royal Commission and by two Committees. He quite agreed with the noble Earl that those who were not connected with the Departments, and whom he described as “laymen,” had the right to manifest the greatest interest in the questions raised, and particularly in the question whether the weapons placed in the hands of our soldiers and sailors were fit for them to use. He also agreed that great anxiety had been produced in the country by the issue of weapons complained of as defective; and therefore had been that a Royal Commission had been issued to inquire into the facts, and a Committee was sitting under his noble Friend formerly Under Secretary for War (the Earl of Morley) to inquire whether im-

provements could be suggested with a view to greater efficiency and economy in the Royal Laboratory and gun, gun carriage, and small arms factories, in the testing of weapons, in checking the quality of articles supplied under contracts, and, indeed, into all the points raised by the noble Earl. In addition to that, in consequence of the excitement produced in the country by the issue of alleged defective cutlasses and sword bayonets by the War Office, an independent Committee had been appointed to inquire into all the circumstances of those issues, as well as into the character of the present stores and the weapons now in use. In these circumstances he deprecated discussion at a time when, he would submit, the House was not in possession of information without which it was impossible that any discussion could be fair and complete. It was impossible to discuss this grave question adequately on this occasion, and he hoped the noble Earl would consent to withdraw the Motion. With regard to the Schedule moved for at first by the noble Earl, that Schedule would not have been complete. In the first instance the War Department made out a Schedule of complaints made by the Admiralty, and sent it to the Admiralty, asking whether it was complete. The Admiralty thought it not complete, and supplied a supplementary Schedule. These two Schedules, which contained every complaint, had been placed before the Royal Commission.

EARL STANHOPE asked whether saddles, bridles, and harness and other things would come under the inquiry into the supply of military stores? It had been stated that saddlery of the time of the Crimean War was still kept in the military stores.

LORD HARRIS replied that it was an inquiry into everything that had been complained of, and that included saddlery.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH said, that in the discussion frequent use had been made of the word “officer.” So far as he knew, not a single military or naval officer had been responsible for any of these transactions in the War Department. For the last 15 years not any military officer had been responsible in that Department; and, doubtless, that observation was equally applicable to naval officers at the Admiralty. Sooner

or later, now that the people had the power in their hands, naval and military officers would be placed at the head of the War Office and Admiralty, instead of, as at present, the civil element predominating in both Departments, since only by military and naval officers being respectively responsible for their Departments would real economy combined with efficiency be thoroughly attained.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY said, he would, of course, withdraw his Motion as requested by his noble Friend; but he would give Notice that unless he received some assurance that untrustworthy weapons would not be issued pending the inquiry, he would feel it his duty to bring the matter forward again.

LORD HARRIS said, he would direct the attention of the noble Earl to the answer given in "another place" by the Surveyor General of Ordnance, to the effect that all cutlasses and sword bayonets complained of were being withdrawn and tested as rapidly as possible.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN asked whether the cutlasses were being tested by the naval authorities?

LORD HARRIS said, that Question ought to be addressed to the Admiralty.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

INDIA—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS.

POSTPONEMENT OF QUESTION.

THE EARL OF DERBY, who had a Notice on the Paper to ask as to the release of 25,000 prisoners in India, said, that about two hours before coming down to the House he had received a communication from his noble Friend the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) requesting him to postpone until Tuesday next the Questions which stood in his name, in order that his noble Friend might obtain information from India; and, under those circumstances, he would postpone asking the Questions until Tuesday.

RAILWAY RATES.—QUESTION.

LORD VERNON asked the President of the Board of Trade, When the Bill dealing with railway rates would be submitted to the House, and hoped that the Government would urge on the Bill as much as possible?

Lord Ellenborough

THE PRESIDENT (Lord STANLEY of PRESTON), in reply, said, he hoped the Bill would be presented next week, or early in the week after.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 25.) THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."
—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD DENMAN, in rising to move as an Amendment to leave out "now" and add at the end of the Motion "this day six months" said, that with the permission of their Lordships he wished to read a letter received by him in 1874 from a Member of the House of Commons. It was to the following effect:—

"I have to thank you for several valuable and interesting communications. I take with me the remarks which you copied respecting the Appeal to the Lords in the case of Mr. O'Connell. The stopping of the Bill took everyone by surprise; and it is possible—but, I fear, only possible—that better counsels may prevail as regards the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords—at all events there is breathing time. I had some conversation with the (then) present Attorney General and with the Lord Advocate, both of whom are most anxious to check and retrace the step of doing away with one of the chief *raisons d'être* for a House of Peers; and as Mr. Disraeli is personally opposed to the change, it is certainly on the cards that the Government may next Session surprise us as much by its wisdom as it has done this Session by its folly. What a reproach it is to the constructive ability of the Government that with a fair field it cannot constitute an Appeal Court which shall also proceed on the ancient lines of the Constitution. People seem to have got into a sort of maelstrom about law reform which they cannot check, or guide their course, however conscious they are that they are being wiled on to destruction. There is hardly one person on either side of the House of Commons—who is in favour of the House of Lords at all—who really and heartily thinks it a good thing to abolish their judicial functions."

He would not detain their Lordships with any remarks of his own, but would conclude by submitting the Motion which stood in his name.

Amendment *moved* to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

On Question that ("now") stand part of the Motion?

Resolved in the affirmative.

LORD DENMAN, interposing, said: Well, my Lords, this is your usual habit of suicidal policy.

Bill read 3^a accordingly: An Amendment made; Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to
Monday next, a quarter before
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 18th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—*Report*—
Elections (Intervention of Peers, &c.)
[No. 50].

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—
Felixstowe and Bawdsey Ferry Railway.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—
Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) * [175].

Second Reading—First Offenders [132]; Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment [155].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SUTTON DISTRICT WATER BILL.

RESOLUTION.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Sir, I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name with regard to this Bill—namely—

“That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Sutton District Water Bill, to insert a Clause in such Bill by which provision shall be made for the offer of any additional capital by public auction or tender at the best price which can be obtained, unless the Committee on the Bill shall report that such provision ought not to be required, with the reasons on which their opinion is founded.”

Now, Sir, in 1877 the right hon. Gentleman the present Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), when occupying the position of Chairman of Ways and Means, introduced a Motion into this House having for its objects exactly the same provision as that which is contained in my Motion, with this exception—that he proposed to change the Standing Orders in their then state for the purpose of inserting this Auction Clause, as it is called, into all Bills promoted by Gas Companies. Perhaps I may be allowed to explain, in two or three short sentences, what this meant. When a Gas Company or a Water Company come to this

House with a Bill asking for powers to create a Company, or to carry an undertaking on in a particular fashion, a monopoly is granted; and Companies established under such conditions—conditions similar to those laid down in the present Bill—have been able to pay a dividend of from 7 to 10 per cent on their share capital, and the shares of such Companies are quoted on the Stock Exchange and in the public market at from 50 to 75 per cent premium. I will take this particular Company. The shares of the Company now stand at something like 100 per cent premium—that is to say, that £25, which is the price of an original share in the Sutton Water Works Company, can be sold for £50. The same thing was the case with regard to Gas Companies; but in 1877 the right hon. Member (Mr. Raikes) brought in a Standing Order which provided that any Gas Company coming to this House to ask for powers under a new Bill to raise additional capital should be compelled by the terms of that Bill to offer the capital to be subscribed by the public at large—that is to say, by auction, and the clause now known as the “Auction Clause” was inserted in Gas Companies Bills. The object of the clause was this. If the Directors of a Gas Company desired to raise additional capital, and were not required to issue the new shares to the public, they might issue them to themselves at par. That is to say, that they might issue a £100 share at £100, and the next day sell it for £125, £150, or £175, as the case might be, with this result—that the Directors, supposing they took these shares themselves, would mulct the unfortunate people who had to pay either the gas or water rates the difference between the par value and the premium value obtained from the sale. This was felt to be unfair to the public, and an injury to the public, as well as being injurious to the fair working of the large monopolies conferred upon Companies in reference to the supply of gas and water; but in 1877, at the instance of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, all that was altered in the case of Gas Companies, and I remember that the Motion made at that time was supported by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, the late Earl of Iddesleigh, whose loss we all so much regret. What I propose now is that the same rule

which applies to Gas Companies now when they desire to raise additional capital should be made to apply to Water Companies. I am obliged to take this action, in the first instance, against one particular Water Company; but when the Motion is carried, as I have no doubt it will be, I propose to submit a Motion to amend the Standing Orders so as to include all Water Companies who may in future come to this House. The only argument ever used against this change was that it might be injurious to the public in restraining undertakings of this kind; but I think I shall be able to show the House how forced that argument is. It matters nothing to the public so long as the Water Companies get the amount of money they require; but the cheaper the rate at which they raise their capital—that is to say, the smaller amount of money at which the shares are absolutely issued by the Company—the greater the benefit will be to the public. But there is another very serious matter which comes into consideration. For instance, in this very case of the Sutton Water Works—and here let me say that I know nothing about the Company, nor am I even acquainted with the names of the Directors—but what I wish to mention is that a leading member of the Local Authority in that district wrote to me yesterday informing me that it is the intention of the district to purchase out the present Company who are to receive these powers under this Bill. Now, how will the Local Authority be affected? I do not say that the Directors of the Company intend to do anything wrong; I know nothing about them, and I desire to make no accusation against them; but I presume that they will issue the £60,000 they require to raise in shares to themselves and their friends at par; and, if so, they would then be able to sell them on the following day for £90,000. Therefore, when the Local Authority comes to purchase these water works they will be in this position—that they will not only have to purchase the shares at the price at which they were issued, but will have to pay the value of the premium at which they will stand in the market. As a matter of fact, they will have to recoup the shareholders and re-purchase the £30,000 or £40,000 that will have gone into the pockets of the Directors and

their friends. The present share capital stands at £60,000, although only £40,000 have been paid up, and the new shares that it is proposed to issue will also amount to £60,000, and will stand at £90,000, so that between £40,000 and £50,000 will represent the profit which will go into the pockets of private individuals, and will eventually have to be purchased by the Local Authority when it desires to buy up the works. I know it will be said that the same thing happens in the case of every Water Company; but that is the reason why I take the earliest opportunity of endeavouring to correct what I think was a great mistake committed by the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge when he introduced his Motion for the alteration of the Standing Orders by applying it only to Gas Companies. It was evidently an error, and the new Order ought to have applied to Water Companies as well. Therefore, I propose to put this Motion to the House to-day in order that it may be applied to Water Companies as well as Gas Companies; and then I propose to follow it up immediately by another Motion to amend the Standing Orders, so that in future it shall apply to all existing Water Works Companies. By this means we shall save a large sum of money to the Local Authorities under any future Local Government Bill which may be proposed for England and Wales from having to purchase profits made by individuals contrary to the interests of the public at large. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

MR. RICHARDS KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I rise for the purpose of seconding the Motion, and in doing so I will simply call the attention of the House to the fact that the conditions imposed by the Resolution are of a very moderate character. There is one thing I desire to say in justification of the course which I took the other day. I stated that no notice of the intention of the Sutton Water Company to apply for a Bill had appeared in any local paper until the 22nd of January. I find that I understated the case. As a matter of fact no notice whatever has appeared in any local paper; but there was a notice in a paper published many miles off at Guildford. Therefore, I challenge contradiction to my assertion that the Bill was brought in with a secrecy which I

think ought to excite the suspicion of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Sutton District Water Bill, to insert a Clause in such Bill by which provision shall be made for the offer of any additional capital by public auction or tender at the best price which can be obtained, unless the Committee on the Bill shall report that such provision ought not to be required, with the reasons on which their opinion is founded.”—(*Mr. Molloy.*)

MR. CUBITT (*Surrey, Mid*): On behalf of the promoters of the Bill I think we have no reason to complain of the manner in which the hon. Member for King's County (*Mr. Molloy*) has brought this matter before the House. The only reason which the Directors could have for opposing a provision of this kind, if it is proved to be for the public interest, would be that it would be applied to an exceptional case; but I understand that the hon. Member proposes to introduce a new Standing Order, which is to be inserted in the Bills of all Water Companies. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that if such a proposition receives the concurrence of the authorities of the House I shall not be prepared to offer any opposition to its acceptance. The hon. Member stated that he had received a letter from some Local Authority at Sutton, informing him that the district intends at some future time to purchase the Sutton undertaking. Now, I wish to say that this is a District Water Company; that it is not connected with any single parish; and that at the present moment there is no Local Authority in existence which would be able to purchase it. The President of the Local Government Board may have some measure in contemplation which may make the purchase practicable, and in that case the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member may be of some value. With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for North Camberwell (*Mr. Kelly*), I do not think the House would wish me to enter into any discussion now as to the circulation of different local papers; I will only say that the notices of the Water Company were inserted not only in a local paper of large circulation, but also in *The London Gazette*. However, as we are all agreed in regard to the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member, I will only add that I trust the

Sutton Water Company will continue in its present prosperous career.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (*Mr. COURTNEY*) (*Cornwall, Bodmin*): I am glad to hear that the promoters of the Bill are willing to accept the proposal of the hon. Member for King's County (*Mr. Molloy*). There is no reason to doubt that the Instruction involves a principle which ought to be considered by every Private Bill Committee to which a Bill of this kind is referred. As a matter of fact, it is already within the province of a Private Bill Committee to go into such matters, and in some cases Committees have inserted such a clause. I am glad that the Sutton Water Company accept this Instruction, and I am also glad that it is proposed that the Motion should be followed up by another of a more general character. It certainly ought not to stand alone, but it is a matter which ought to be dealt with in a general way. If the hon. Member will do me the honour of consulting me before he moves his Resolution, it is probable we may come to some agreement as to the alteration which ought to be made in the Standing Orders.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (*Mr. RITCHIE*) (*Tower Hamlets, St. George's*): On behalf of the Government I am very glad indeed to find that there is a general agreement in all parts of the House in respect of this Instruction, and also upon the general question. The Government are entirely of opinion that it is not only desirable this Instruction should be carried, but also that there should be an alteration of the Standing Orders, so as to make the principle apply to every Water Company. It is for the interests of the community that whenever an issue of fresh capital is required for enterprises of this kind, that capital should be restricted to the amount which is to be raised and to the actual value of the shares. Of course, if the shares are of more value than the sum at which they are issued so many fewer shares would be required. If, hereafter, a general principle should be adopted which would enable Local Authorities to purchase undertakings of this kind, it should be only incumbent on them to pay the real value of the undertakings. It is, therefore, clearly in the interest of the public, when fresh capital is required for the purpose of carrying out the obligations

cast on Water Companies, that that fresh capital shall be strictly limited to the amount which it is necessary to raise, and, that being so, that the shares should be sold at their real value, and no profit put into the pockets of anybody. Therefore, the Government entirely support not only this Instruction to the Committee on the Sutton Bill, but also the suggestion, which has been endorsed by my hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Courtney), that there should be some alteration of the general law which should prevent the evil which the hon. Member's Resolution calls attention to.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER— THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRADE AND AGRICULTURE.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you a Question on a point of Order. I notice, Sir, that a Motion was last night placed on the Paper by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), to the effect that he will call attention to the general condition of agriculture, as requiring the immediate attention of Parliament. I wish, Sir, to know from you whether the effect of that Notice will be to prevent the discussion of the agricultural situation on the Report of the Address this afternoon?

MR. SPEAKER: I consider that the right hon. Gentleman will be debarred from discussing the question, inasmuch as a Motion on the subject is on the Paper for a future day.

MR. CHAPLIN: Then, Sir, I beg to give Notice that as soon as I can obtain a day, I will call attention to the Report of the Royal Commission on Trade and Agriculture, and to the continued depression of those two branches of industry in the United Kingdom, and move a Resolution.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—CONSERVATORS OF THE LOUGH NEAGH DISTRICT.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What value is given the public or fishermen of Lough Neagh district

by the Conservators of Fisheries under the 11 & 12 *Vict.* c. 92, in return for the heavy Licence Duty so rigidly levied by them, seeing that they are unable to erect wooden jetties to enable the fishermen of Lough Neagh to land their fish; and, whether the whole of the duty paid is consumed by the payment of the official staff under the above Act; and, if so, will the Government propose its repeal?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The value given to the fishermen in this as in other districts in return for the Licence Duty which they have to pay is the increased production of fish owing to a proper system of protection, without which the fisheries would soon deteriorate. The whole of the Licence Duty is consumed by the payment of officials, principally water bailiffs, and other necessary expenses incurred in the protection of the fisheries.

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICES— THE NEW BUILDINGS.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he intends to proceed with the new Admiralty and War Office buildings?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): A Committee of the House of Commons was unanimously appointed last April to reconsider the whole question of the new Admiralty and War Office buildings, and in consequence of that decision undertakings were given to Parliament by my Predecessor and by myself that no building operations should be proceeded with until the Committee should have reported. That Committee lapsed with the dissolution of the last Parliament. But it is the intention of the Government to propose the appointment of a similar Committee this Session, and I hope that the Motion for that purpose will be made within a few days.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS, 1883 AND 1885—THE ENNIS POOR LAW UNION—SCHEME UNDER THE ACTS.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the cause of the delay of the Local Government Board in not sending down their Inspector to the Ennis Poor Law Union to hold the necessary inquiry under the Labourers'

Cottages Act, notwithstanding the repeated applications of the Chairman of the Board that they should do so; and if it is a fact that all the necessary Documents have been lodged with the Local Government Board Solicitor since November last?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Local Government Board report that a number of Petitions from other Unions were lodged much earlier than that of the Ennis Board of Guardians, and must be dealt with first. It is not the case that the necessary documents have been lodged since November. On the contrary, none were received until about Christmas, and some have not yet been received. As soon as the documents still wanting are sent in, and the services of an Inspector are available, the inquiry will proceed.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—INSPECTORS OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is a fact that the Chief, First Class, and Local Inspectors of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police are not able to attain the rank of Divisional Superintendents without reverting back to duty in uniform at a lower rate of pay; and, if so, whether he will take steps to remove a restriction on the attainment of the highest ordinary post in the Force, which must have a prejudicial effect in obtaining the best officers for the Department particularly charged with the detection of crime?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the fact is not as stated in my right hon. Friend's Question. The Chief Commissioner is responsible for the efficiency of the officers in each branch of the Service; and his method of selection and promotion has had no prejudicial effect on the efficiency of the Criminal Investigation Department.

COLLECTION OF TITHES—BIDDENDEN, KENT.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following

paragraph in *The South Eastern Gazette* of 20th December last, with reference to the collection of tithes in the parish of Biddenden, Kent—

"A Protected Tithe Collector.—During last week Mr. Peterson, junior, attended by a police constable, collected nearly all the outstanding tithes due to his father, the Rev. W. Peterson;"

whether the services of the police constable were paid for out of the county police rate or by the Rector of Biddenden; and, whether it is to be understood that the active assistance of the police can in like manner be obtained by the farmers and shopkeepers of Biddenden in the recovery of their debts?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have no authority over county police and no control of their movements, nor any knowledge of the way in which any particular service is paid for. In this case I am informed by the Chief Constable of the county that the police constable in question was in attendance with the agent appointed to collect the tithes, because he was informed that a breach of the peace was likely to occur, but that he did not go off his beat or leave the main road. The active assistance of the police can be obtained to prevent breaches of the peace, but not for the recovery of debts.

INLAND FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE RIVER AVOCA.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that the Avoca River has been poisoned for some years and the fish destroyed by the drainage from the mines, and that a strong desire exists to remedy the evil; whether he is aware that the inhabitants of the district have had plans and estimates made by Mr. W. G. Strype, C.E., from which it appears that the purification of the river could be effected for £8,000 or £10,000; and, whether he will cause the Inspectors of Fisheries to inquire into the matter with a view to the accomplishment of so important an object?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Inspectors of Fisheries report that it is the case that the Avoca River has for many years been poisoned by mines, and that some persons connected with the locality are desirous of remedying the

evil. Nothing is known officially of the plans of Mr. Strype. The Inspectors will inquire into the matter as suggested.

BURIALS—REMOVAL OF THE DEAD FROM CHURCHYARDS AND BURIAL GROUNDS.

MR. PITT-LEWIS (Devon, Barnstaple) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the removal, without lawful authority, of a corpse from a grave, whether in a churchyard or in the burial ground of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters, is indictable at Common Law, and this for the express reason that it is an offence against public decency, and an outrage on the feelings of the living; under what authority the Home Department issues licences for the removal of the dead from their place of burial; whether it is the practice of the Home Department to grant licences for the removal of the dead, as a matter of right, on the mere application of any person who can show a legal title to the ground in which such dead are interred, or whether any, and what, discretion is exercised as to such licences; whether it is the practice of the Home Department to grant such licences without previous direct communication, by the Department itself, with the surviving relatives of the persons whose bodies it is intended to remove, for the purpose of affording such relatives an opportunity of themselves arranging with the Department for the removal of their dead, and their re-interment at a place in a manner consonant with their natural feelings and religious views; whether it is the practice of the Department to take any, and what, precautions for the purpose of effectually securing that any removal of the dead which may take place under the licence of the Department shall be conducted in a manner consistent with public decency, and with a due regard to the feelings of any relatives who may still be surviving; whether, on the 5th November last, a licence was granted by the Home Department for the digging up and removal to the parish churchyard of the bodies of three persons—namely, Mrs. Mary Irwin, Anna Maria Coad, and Robert Elliot Coad, who had for many years laid buried in a burial ground attached to a Nonconformist Chapel in the parish of Morthoe,

North Devon; whether such licence was granted by the Home Department at the sole instance of the Trustees of the Chichester Estate; whether he is aware of the circumstances under which the Chichester Estate had acquired such property—namely, that, about 50 years since, Mr. T. Smith, a landowner in the village, gave to his sister, the late Mrs. Mary Irwin, a piece of freehold land on which to build a chapel; that, some time after the gift had been made and the chapel had been publicly opened, and the burial ground openly used as a place of interment, an exchange of some lands which were intermixed was made between Mr. Smith and the Chichester Estate, and, on the occasion of that exchange, the chapel and burying ground were, without communication with the persons who had erected and used the chapel and burial ground, turned from freehold into a leasehold, determinable on Mr. Smith's death, and that on the death of Mr. Smith in March last, the Chichester Trustees took immediate possession of both chapel and burying ground and forthwith ejected the congregation, and refused to listen to any offer whatever by the congregation and the relatives of the persons interred therein for the sale to them of the chapel and burying ground; whether he is aware that the husband of the deceased Mrs. Mary Irwin is still alive, at the age of 83 years, and resident close to Morthoe, and that her daughter and son-in-law were also the parents of the two other persons whose bodies were removed, and that they and numerous other relatives are resident in the locality; if he will explain why, when the Home Department determined to sanction the removal of these three bodies, a previous intimation was not directly given to these relatives, to the effect that they might themselves within a certain time, on application, obtain a licence for the removal and re-interment of the bodies in a manner in accordance with their feelings, and that, in default of application by them within the time named, a licence for the removal of the bodies would be granted to the Chichester Trustees; and, whether no communication whatever (other than an official acknowledgment of their letters) was made by the Department to any of the relatives of the deceased; whether

the actual removal of the bodies took place on 17th December last; and, whether some days before the Parliamentary Representative of the Division drew the attention of the Home Department to the case by an official communication, enclosing to the Department a letter from one of the relatives, expressing willingness, if sufficient time were afforded, to arrange for the removal of the bodies; and, whether in reply both to that and also to another communication from the relatives, a mere official acknowledgment was sent, and the fact that the licence had been actually issued, and would be forthwith acted on, was omitted to be communicated; whether the removal of the bodies took place in the dead of the night, and whether the following statement by Mr. Coad is a correct account of the manner in which it was effected—

“This is how it was done; the bones of my dear wife's mother were picked up and put into a bucket, and thus brought from the tomb. The coffins of my dear son and daughter were taken up, and then it was found that one of the new coffins brought in at midnight from Barnstaple was not large enough, and the dear girl's corpse was put back into the grave again. The other two bodies were taken to the churchyard, and left unburied from four o'clock on Wednesday morning to Friday morning; then the three corpses were buried in the dark as though they were three suicides;”

whether the manner in which the removal of these bodies was conducted was in accordance with the regulations of the Home Department; whether he is aware that the proceedings which have taken place in this case have been condemned by the Archdeacon of Barnstaple, and by the Secretary and Registrar of the Bishop of the Diocese; and, whether he will take measures to in future prevent any licence for the removal of bodies being issued without previous communication with the relatives of the deceased, and to prevent any similar proceedings taking place under the shelter of a licence from the Home Office?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): To remove a dead body without authority is an offence indictable at Common Law, and also summarily punishable under statute. Licences are issued under the Burials Act, 20 & 21 *Vict.* c. 81, s. 25. On application being made it is usual to refer to the Inspector of Burial Grounds,

by whom, in cases where he thinks it necessary, Circulars are issued (1) to the applicants; (2) to the relatives, asking if they had objection to the removal. In this case the latter Circular was not sent, the Secretary of State having been informed by the applicant that the relations had caused application to be made for the removal, but that no progress had been made. The licence for removal is granted on condition, among others, that the removal be effected with due care and attention to decency. If those conditions are not complied with, the penalties attach under the Act. At the time of granting the licence I had no knowledge of the history of the family or of the property. Before the licence was acted on I was informed that no deed of gift from Mr. Smith to Mrs. Irwin had ever been produced or mentioned; that Mr. Smith exchanged the site of the chapel and burial ground for other lands belonging to the Chichester Estate; that Mr. Smith took a leasehold interest in that site; that the three persons named were buried in the burial ground while it was vested as a leasehold in Mr. Smith, and without the consent or knowledge of the freeholders, the Chichester Trustees. When the lease came to an end in 1886 the relatives of the buried persons were twice invited by the Trustees to effect the removal themselves, and were offered a month for the purpose. Under such circumstances, I saw nothing that would justify me in interfering with the execution of the order of removal, provided the sanitary conditions laid down in the licence were observed. The removal of the bodies was effected, as I am informed, with propriety and decency, in the presence of a representative of the relations, who expressed himself satisfied. I am not aware that the proceedings have been condemned, and I see no reason to alter the usual practice of the Department with regard to the issue of licences.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked a number of further Questions on the same subject, inquiring, amongst other things, whether it was not the duty of the Secretary of State to make inquiries before granting licences; whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman was aware that the description of the removal of the bodies quoted in the printed Question was written by

a relative of one of the deceased persons; and whether he thought the requirements of decency had been complied with?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am not aware of any of the circumstances alluded to by the hon. Member.

MR. CONYBEARE: I give Notice, then, that I will draw further attention to this matter.

BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND) — TEACHERS AND THE ORANGE SOCIETY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is in accordance with the spirit of the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, that teachers under the Board should be members of the Orange Society; and, whether it is true that Mr. James A. Irwin, teacher of the Carrickawilkin (County Armagh) National School, in which a number of Roman Catholic children are pupils, is a member of the Orange Society, and attached to the Lodge of the District in which the school is situate; and, if so, what action the Commissioners of the Board of National Education propose taking in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Under the Rules of the National Education Board in Ireland teachers should avoid political meetings, and I am informed that the Commissioners would regard attendance at an Orange Lodge as a breach of their Regulations. The Commissioners have no knowledge of the circumstances alleged in the Question as to Mr. Irwin; but they will direct their Inspector to make inquiries.

BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MRS. HARRIET SONTER, A TEACHER IN BELFAST.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Mrs. Harriet Sonter, lately one of the principal teachers of the National Schools in Belfast, who died in November last; whether this lady was over 34 years in the service of the National Board, and during that period

had discharged her duties zealously and efficiently; whether she has left five children entirely unprovided for; whether it is the case that if she had lived for two months longer she would have been entitled to £300 compensation money on retirement, and that she was actually in correspondence with the Board immediately prior to her death as to her retiring compensation; and, whether the Board propose, under the circumstances, to make any provision for Mrs. Sonter's children?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Mrs. Sonter served under the Commissioners of National Education as stated, and died a few months ago. Had she lived to retire from the Service she would have been entitled in about two months' time to a pension of £30 a-year, terminable with her life; but the pension scheme provides no retiring gratuities for female teachers of 50 years of age and upwards. In no circumstances, therefore, could Mrs. Sonter have been entitled to £300 compensation money on retirement, as alleged in the Question.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) inquired whether, as the deceased had served so many years in the Public Service, the right hon. Gentleman did not think it was a case where a compassionate allowance should be made to her children?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: There are no funds in the hands of the Education Board for compassionate allowances; but I have brought a similar case to this under the notice of the Lord Lieutenant, that His Excellency might decide whether a grant should be made from the funds at his disposal; and I will look into this case and see whether I can do the same.

MR. MAURICE HEALY inquired whether a grant had been made in the other case to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I am not quite sure what was the result.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS—UNOCCUPIED FARMS.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether he will make provision in the next Agricultural Returns for ascertaining, as in 1881, the number and acreage of arable farms in England and Wales now unoccupied?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): The Returns are now being printed; but I am endeavouring to have a column added for the information asked for in the hon. Member's Question.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT, 1878— "FURTHER LEGISLATION."

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he intends to introduce this Session a Bill to amend "The Weights and Measures Act, 1878," as the Standard Department of the Board of Trade reported that "further legislation" is necessary to make the Act effective for the prevention of fraud?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The question of legislation in connection with the Weights and Measures Act is receiving the careful attention of the Department, and the Board of Trade hope to be able to arrange the preparation of a measure as soon as the state of Public Business will admit of it.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE—CHANCERY DIVISION—DISTRIBUTION OF BUSI- NESS.

MR. F. W. MACLEAN (Oxford, Woodstock) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to give effect to, or take any action upon, the Report (dated the 7th August, 1885) of the Committee appointed by the Lord Chancellor to inquire into the subject of the existing Rules as to the distribution of business in the Courts and Chambers of the Chancery Division, and the distribution of the Clerical Staff?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): The Report in question was, in fact, considered very carefully immediately after it was presented, and so many of the recommendations as appeared to be matters of practice requiring Rules of Court were adopted by the Rule Committee of Judges in the issue of the Rules of the Supreme Court of December, 1885. The working of those Rules, and the observance of uniformity of practice in the Courts and Chambers of the Chancery Division, as recommended by the Committee, rests with the Judges of that Division themselves, and not with the Go-

vernment. The remaining recommendations of the Committee, as the hon. and learned Member is aware, are based upon the assumption that a sixth Judge should be added to the Chancery Division, a condition precedent depending upon the sanction of Parliament.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—LORD AN- NESLEY'S ESTATE AT BELFAST.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a statement which appeared in the daily papers of Monday the 14th February instant, to the effect that Lord Annesley had telegraphed from India, refusing to give any reduction in the present rents to his County Down tenants, who had presented him with a Memorial in which they expressed their inability to pay the same; whether the reduction given by the Land Commission at Belfast, on 30th November last, in the rent of one of his tenants—namely, Mrs. Elizabeth Savage, of Backaderry, Castlewellsan, was upwards of five times the amount of the reduction given by the Sub-Commission, from whose decision the tenant appealed; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Government will endeavour to secure for Lord Annesley's tenants a reduction in their present rents commensurate with the fall in the prices of produce and with the necessities of the case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): A newspaper statement to the effect mentioned has been published, but I do not know whether it is correct. The facts as regards the case of Mrs. Savage are that her rent was reduced by the Sub-Commissioners from £37 6s. to £36, and further reduced on appeal to £31.

MR. M'CARTAN said, the right hon. Gentleman had not said whether, under the circumstances, the Government would endeavour to secure for Lord Annesley's tenants a reduction on their present rents commensurate with the fall in the prices of produce and with the necessities of the case.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do not think it necessary for me to interfere.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman have any objection to apply pressure within the law in this case?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have explained to the House the circumstances under which we acted. I do not think this is a case in which the Government are called upon to take any steps.

MR. M'CARTAN: Then am I to understand that the tenants must rely upon their own endeavours to obtain justice?

[No reply.]

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—
BELMULLET PIER.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the Board of Works, having finished the works on the pier on the Blacksod side of Belmullet, for which a grant was made by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners, purpose fixing a rate of tolls to be levied thereat in future on all goods landed on that pier; so that, when handed over to the county, the Grand Jury may have some revenue to keep it in repair; if not, whether he will direct the Board to do this, under the powers given to them by one of the Acts of Parliament relating to such works, so that the Grand Jury may be able to collect the tolls when the pier is transferred to the county?

THE SECRETARY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, that when the pier at the Blacksod side of Belmullet, for which a grant had been made by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners, was transferred to the Grand Jury, the Board of Works would, as in all similar cases, on the request of the Grand Jury, fix a schedule of tolls to be levied thereat.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the pier and harbour at the Broadhaven side of Belmullet, for which a grant was made by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners, will be finished; at what date was it commenced; and, what is the reason of the delay in completing the works.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: The works on the pier and harbour at the Broadhaven side of Belmullet were commenced on February 10, 1886, and all the masonry was finished on January 13, 1887, with the exception of the granite

coping, which had been detained since December 8 last at Blacksod Point by stress of weather, but was now being carted overland. The excavation of the channel would be tedious. The date of its probable completion could not be stated at present. There had not been any delay that could have been avoided.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—
ALLOWANCES FOR HORSES.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether an officer of the Constabulary in Ireland is allowed £50 a-year for a horse as well as an allowance of 9d. a mile for every mile travelled over six miles from the headquarter station; and, whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing the amount paid to each County Inspector on account of this mileage allowance during the last year for which the accounts are complete?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): All Constabulary officers receive an allowance of £50 a-year to enable them to keep a horse and purchase a fresh one when necessary. The Question set down by the hon. Member, however, appears to be intended to apply only to County Inspectors, as the reference to the six-mile limit is applicable only in their case. For travelling on their quarterly inspection duty they receive the mileage allowance stated, outside a radius of six miles from their headquarters. On other duties they are paid the actual expense of travelling by public conveyance, so far as such is available, and mileage for the rest of the journey.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—MARCH-
ING ALLOWANCES TO VOLUNTEERS.

MR. LAMBERT (Islington, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, in reference to the statement made by him that a grant of daily pay would be given to all Volunteers taking part in future marching columns, Whether the same privilege, and to what amount, would be extended to members of the Yeomanry Cavalry who might also form part of the same columns?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): No, Sir. The marching allowance to which my former answer

applied relates exclusively to the Volunteers. The Yeomanry are, under similar circumstances, already provided for by the rate of pay applicable to them.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION — IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE — MR. PAGET, WANDSWORTH POLICE COURT.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been directed to the report in *The Daily News* of 3rd December 1886, of a case heard before Mr. Paget, at the Wandsworth Police Court, on the previous day, relating to the irregular attendance at school of the child of a Mr. John Carmichael, in which the Magistrate is represented to have said that—

“The defendant took advantage of the Board School to have his child educated out of the rates,”

and that—

“If the defendant submitted to the degradation, as a respectable man, of having his child educated out of the rates, he must conform to the rules;”

whether such language was actually used; and, whether Mr. Paget has by statute any right to decide on any other matter beside the validity of the reason given for the irregularity of the attendance at school?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a Report from the learned magistrate on this case, and he says that, at this length of time, he cannot state the exact expressions that he used; but that he certainly used none which he should consider inappropriate to the circumstances of the case. There is no statute regulating the discretion of magistrates in making such comments as they think proper on any particular case. The only decision given by Mr. Paget was that the defendant had incurred a fine of 6s.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Did Mr. Paget say it was a degradation for a man to take his child to be educated at a Board School?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have communicated to the hon. Member who put the Question and to the House the effect of the answer I have received from the learned magistrate, and I have nothing to add to it. I can hand the right hon. Gentleman the magistrate's letter if he desires it.

PORT AND DOCKS BOARD, DUBLIN—TENDERS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the particulars of any tenders sent in to the Port and Docks Board, Dublin, were made known to interested parties before the same were officially laid before the Board for consideration; and, whether the tender last accepted for canvass was not 10 per cent higher than the tender of Messieurs M'Cann and Co., who, for the two years preceding, supplied this article without fault or complaint?

THE SECRETARY (BARON HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have no control over the Dublin Port and Docks Board, and are unable to give the hon. Member the information he desires.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE — REVISION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS' LIST.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has received from the Chairman of the Sligo Board of Guardians a copy of a Resolution expressing the unanimous opinion of his Board that the expense of the revision of the Parliamentary Voters' List should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund instead of being chargeable on the union; and, whether, in consequence of the general complaint on this head, the Government purpose introducing a Bill on the subject?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Resolution was duly received; but I cannot add anything to the answer I gave to a similar Question yesterday.

STATE OF IRELAND—PROCESSION OF ORANGE BANDS—BALLYMONEY.

MR. PINKERTON (Galway) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether there was a procession of Orange bands in Ballymoney, North Antrim, on Saturday night; whether windows were broken in the houses of leading supporters of the Liberal candidate; whether the Resident Magistrate (Mr. Rutherford) had a sufficient force under his charge to maintain order; and, what steps, if any, were taken to prevent injury to

property, and bring the perpetrators to justice?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Resident Magistrate reports that three Protestant bands played through the town of Ballymoney after the declaration of the poll. They did not march in procession, but went separately. Some roughs, who followed these bands, broke a few panes of glass in the course of the evening. This occurred after dark, and no one could be identified. There was no disturbance or breach of the peace, the police force present being sufficient to prevent any such occurrence.

MR. PINKERTON asked, was the right hon. Gentleman aware that a meeting of the North Antrim Constitutional Association condemned the outrages, and offered to pay the amount of damage inflicted on the Liberal inhabitants of Ballymoney by the Orange rioters?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : The damage does not appear to be very much, and I am glad to hear somebody is going to pay it.

MINING INDUSTRIES (IRELAND).

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of the anxiety expressed by Government to promote the material prosperity of the country, What steps are intended to be taken to develop the mining industries of Ireland, especially in the County of Wicklow, where gold has been found, and where iron, lead, and copper ores are known to exist extensively?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The particular matters on which I have expressed my anxiety to promote the material prosperity of Ireland are those which have been referred to the Royal Commission—namely, arterial drainage, deep-sea fisheries, and improved means of communication. I do not see what can be done to develop the mining industry, especially having regard to the present low prices of the principal minerals.

EVICTIIONS (IRELAND)—THE RETURN.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention

has been called to the Return of Evictions for the quarter ending 31st December, 1886, from which it appears that 3,369 persons were evicted during the quarter; that 90 were re-admitted as tenants, and 2,142 as caretakers, leaving 1,137 persons homeless; whether he is aware that evictions are still of daily occurrence; and, whether, in view of the hardships and sufferings caused to these poor people, many of whom are helpless women and children, Government will consider if it is possible by any means to put a stop to evictions in midwinter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I very much sympathize with the wish expressed in this Question that evictions should, as far as possible, be avoided in midwinter; but I doubt whether it would be practicable entirely to stop them then. But it is satisfactory to notice that the number of evictions, comparatively speaking, has been decidedly low in the quarter ending December 31, 1886; and I may remind the hon. Member that the Guardians are bound to provide shelter and relief for any homeless or destitute persons.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Would it be possible to establish a close season for evictions?

[No reply.]

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—

ACCOUNTS OF OFFICIAL ASSIGNEES

—MR. C. H. JAMES.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the provisions of the 20 & 21 *Vict.*, c. 60, s. 350, and of General Order 245, both requiring an official assignee to account once in every six months in every bankruptcy and arrangement matter, were observed by the late Mr. C. H. James; whether they are observed by the present official assignees; whether any, and, if so, what, steps have been taken to insure that the irregularities proved against Mr. James will not be repeated by the existing officials; whether the powers given by the 20 & 21 *Vict.*, c. 60, s. 21, of making Rules to regulate the audit of official assignees' accounts have ever been put in force; and, whether there is any reason why the accounts of official assignees should not be audited periodically by a public auditor?

Mr. Pinkerton

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University), in reply, said, he was informed, with regard to the first paragraph, that such a Rule was only observed in some cases. Steps had been taken to put in force the powers referred to in the third paragraph. A Committee some time ago drew up certain recommendations, which were being carried out, and a satisfactory mode of auditing would, he hoped, be adopted.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked if the Report of the recent defalcations would shortly be laid on the Table?

MR. HOLMES was unable to say when such Report would be presented.

CORPORATION OFFICIALS—BRIBERY BY COMMISSIONS.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the disclosures in the recent trial of "Hunter v. Lever," the Government propose to increase the stringency of the law dealing with the bribery of Corporation officials by means of commissions on purchases made by them?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The question of increasing the stringency of the law as to commissions received by agents was carefully considered by the Home Office Authorities in 1877, and a Bill was drafted for the purpose. However, in deference to the strongly expressed opinion of the then Lord Chancellor (Lord Cairns), that the civil remedies of the existing law were sufficiently strong, the Bill was not proceeded with. The subject is one well worthy of consideration, no doubt; but the Government do not at present intend to propose any alteration in the law.

MR. HOWORTH: I should like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether the case of "Hunter v. Lever" is not of sufficient importance to be placed in the hands of the Public Prosecutor?

MR. MATTHEWS: So far as I am aware, there is no law at present under which Mr. Hunter could be prosecuted criminally. There are, however, plenty of civil remedies in the matter. The case has not been sufficiently brought to my attention for me to give a decided opinion upon it.

MR. HOWORTH: Is the Home Secretary aware that this man is a magistrate, and does he not think that he ought to be removed from the Bench?

[No reply.]

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ANNUAL HOLIDAYS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his Order of the 30th November last, making uniform the Rule as to annual holidays, has not yet been put into operation in the Dublin Office; and, whether he will take steps to secure the uniformity prescribed in the Order?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the Rule to which he refers is about to be applied to the Dublin Post Office.

POLICE AND CONSTABULARY FORCES IN GREAT BRITAIN—SUPERANNUATION.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When he will introduce the promised Bill to provide for the superannuation of Police and Constabulary Forces in Great Britain?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Birmingham, E.) (Mr. MATTHEWS): As I informed my hon. Friend last Session, I am fully aware of the importance of this subject; but looking to the present condition of Public Business he cannot expect me to make any definite pledge as to legislation. I can only say that I will do my best to further the efforts already made by my Predecessors in Office to place the present system of police pensions on a more satisfactory basis.

ADMIRALTY—NAVAL OPERATIONS IN NEW GUINEA.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he has received any Papers regarding the operations of a Naval Expedition reported to have visited Jeannet Island, New Guinea, and burned several Native villages, to avenge some murders committed by the inhabitants in October last; and, if so, whether he will lay them upon the Table of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Great excitement has been caused in the Australian Colonies by the massacre of Captain Craig and the crew of the *Emily* while pearl-fishing off Jeannet Island. An indignation meeting has been held at Cooktown, and the matter has been the subject of excited debate in the Queensland Parliament. Captain Clayton, in Her Majesty's ship *Diamond*, was sent by the Commander-in-Chief on the Australian Station to inquire into the matter; but from the information we have received it appears that he has been unable to punish the murderers, as they escaped into the bush on the approach of the ship.

EGYPT—RIGHT OF COMMERCIAL CONVENTION WITH FOREIGN POWERS.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government recognize, and, if so, in what measure, the rights of the Egyptian Government to conclude Commercial Conventions or Treaties with Foreign Powers; and, whether, under existing Treaties, the sanction of the Porte is necessary in each case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): Her Majesty's Government certainly recognize the right of His Highness the Khedive to conclude Commercial Treaties and Conventions with Foreign Powers which are not in derogation of the Political Treaties of the Sultan, nor of His Imperial Majesty's sovereign rights over Egypt, the matter being expressly regulated by the Firman of Investiture granted to the present Khedive, and dated the 2nd of August, 1879, which will be found at page 51 of the Parliamentary Paper, Egypt No. 1, 1880.

CHINA AND BURMAH—THE DELIMITATION COMMISSION, 1886.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What progress has been made with the negotiations contemplated in the Convention with China, signed at Peking on the 27th July, 1886, which provides that the frontier between Burmah and China shall be settled by a Delimitation Commission, and that the

conditions of frontier trade shall be settled by a Frontier Trade Commission?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): The condition of affairs in Upper Burmah has hitherto prevented any progress being made with the negotiations for the delimitation of the frontier between China and Burmah; but I can assure my hon. Friend that this matter has not been lost sight of by Her Majesty's Government.

LUNACY—DETENTION OF AN ALLEGED LUNATIC.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the fact that a Mrs. Charles told the Paddington Guardians, on Wednesday last, that she was sent seven years ago to a lunatic asylum and retained there until the other day, although she was perfectly sane; whether the statement is true; by whom she was thus immured; and, whether any and what steps can be taken to punish the persons who placed her in the asylum, to compensate her for the injury done to her, and to prevent such occurrences for the future?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: The Question of the hon. Member appears to be founded on a misconception of the nature of the statement made by Mrs. Charles to her fellow guardians. That lady did not state that she had herself been in a lunatic asylum. Her statement referred to a female of whose case she was giving particulars. The Lunacy Commissioners inform me that it is impossible to make any inquiry or answer any question unless they are supplied with the name of the person and the approximate date of her admission to an asylum. The name of the asylum should also, if possible, be given. I have directed a letter to be written to the Paddington Board of Guardians with a view of eliciting this information.

POST OFFICE (INDIA) — TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT — PRESIDENCY ALLOWANCE.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, When the grant of Presidency Allowances, such as are

drawn by officers of the Public Works Department, will be extended to officers of the Telegraph Department, the power to grant such allowances having been vested in the Director General of Telegraphs by Letter No. 1,001, E.G. dated 15th July, 1876, from Government of India Public Works Department?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): I have no official information which enables me to answer this Question; but the Secretary of State will cause inquiry to be made.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—COLEFORD—SENTENCE ON AN OLD MAN.

MR. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What action he has taken with reference to the case of an old man, over 70 years of age, named William Jones, who is now undergoing a sentence of two months' imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol on a charge of trespass and setting traps to catch birds in the Forest of Dean, and to whose conviction, by the Coleford Bench of Magistrates, his attention was specially directed on Monday morning last?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have considered this case, and obtained a Report from the Justices upon it. It appears that this prisoner was tried and found guilty on two separate charges—(1) of setting traps to catch wood-pigeons on the 9th of January; (2) of trespassing in search of game with a gun on the 22nd of January. He had been cautioned several times previously for similar acts. Under the circumstances, I do not feel justified in advising any interference with the sentence.

PRISON LABOUR—MAT-WEAVING.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is a fact that the mat-weaving trade suffers severely from the competition of prison labour; and, if so, whether, in view of the scarcity of employment resulting from the general industrial depression, he will take steps to preserve the existence of a useful and extensive industry by directing that prison-made

mats shall not be offered for sale at less than the market price?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: Since the Commissioners took over the local prisons every effort has been made to gradually reduce the number of prisoners employed on this industry, with the result that, whereas the daily average number of prison mat-makers in 1878 was 2,959, it was only 1,681 in the year ending the 31st of March last. It may be added that, within the same period, the mat-making trade has been entirely abolished in all convict prisons, the number of convict mat-makers employed having at one time been as high as 266. With regard to the question of price, all mats made for sale at prisons are disposed of at a uniform rate, fixed with due regard to that which prevails in the mat-making trade, which is not undersold. The policy of the Department was stated in a letter directed by the late Secretary of State to be written to the hon. Member for the Sudbury Division of Suffolk (Mr. Quilter) on June 11, 1886, to be that prison industries should be as varied as possible; that steps should on all occasions be taken to ensure their obtaining the highest price that any dealer can afford to give; and that prison labour should, as far as possible, be employed in work of all kinds for other Government Departments.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—TRANSMISSION OF A FALSE AND UNSIGNED TELEGRAM.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether his attention has been drawn to the paragraph in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of Thursday, describing "an outrage of a peculiarly cruel and dastardly nature" in form of a false and unsigned telegram being sent to a certain person, who was nearly killed by the shock it caused him; whether it is the fact, as therein stated, that the—

"Author of this abominable outrage is known but will probably escape punishment, as the Post Office declines to take up the matter, and the Public Prosecutor has so far paid no attention to the representations made to him;"

and, whether he proposes to take any and what steps in the matter to further the ends of justice?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight), in reply, said, that the facts, as stated in the Question, did not disclose any case upon which the Public Prosecutor could take action. The recipient of the telegram referred to had made no complaint either to the Director of Telegraphs or to the Public Prosecutor.

(MINES) SCOTLAND—ASSISTANT INSPECTORSHIP OF MINES IN WESTERN DIVISION.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the wishes of the miners of the district, Her Majesty's Government will appoint a practical miner to the vacancy which exists in the Assistant Inspectorship of Mines for the Western Division of Scotland?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I beg to assure the hon. Member that I shall appoint to this office a person who, in my opinion, possesses the necessary qualifications for the efficient discharge of the duties of the post.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether the working miners will be consulted in the matter?

[No reply.]

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — THE VOLUNTEERS—EXTRA PAY TO PERMANENT STAFF.

COLONEL EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is a fact that about £11,300 is paid to the Permanent Staff by Volunteer Corps, under the head of extra pay; whether the Permanent Staff are not paid by the Government; whether, as the Report of the Committee which is just published is that such payment is inadmissible, he will take measures to put a stop to this expenditure; and, whether, if the pay of the Permanent Staff is insufficient, he will consider their case, with a view to increase their pay?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): It appears from the Tables prepared by the Volunteer Capitation Committee that the Permanent Staff received in the five years 1881-5 the

average annual sum of £12,681, under the head of extra pay. The Permanent Staff are paid by the Government at rates of pay which are considered sufficient, and I think the principle of additions to the Government allowance objectionable. I will consider whether Regulations should be issued forbidding the grant of extra pay.

BURIALS—ATTLEBOROUGH NEW CEMETERY.

MR. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) (for Mr. GURDON, Norfolk, Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in reply to a communication from the Rector of Attleborough, Norfolk, he has informed him that he cannot lawfully conduct a Burial Service in the new cemetery until some portion thereof has been consecrated; whether the 12th section of "The Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880," protects from censure or penalties Ministers of the Church of England who may perform the Burial Service in any unconsecrated ground or cemetery; and, whether he will lay upon the Table any Correspondence or Telegrams between the Home Office and the Rector or the Burial Board of Attleborough?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Rector of Attleborough was informed on the 1st of January, in answer to his inquiry, that until the legal requirements had been complied with, he could not conduct a burial service there. The view taken in the Home Office at that time was that the 12th section of the Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880, exempts from censure or penalties ministers of the Church of England who perform the Burial Service in unconsecrated ground; only where such ground has been legally established as a burial ground, and the provisions of the Burial Acts have been complied with. I must not be understood to assert that this view of the effect of somewhat complicated statutes is the right one. There is no objection to lay on the Table the correspondence and telegrams between the Home Office and the Rector and the Burial Board of Attleborough. But as it is voluminous, the object of the hon. Member might, perhaps, be best attained by his paying a second visit to the Home Office, and perusing the correspondence there.

ADMIRALTY—"GREENWICH SIX-PENCES' FUND."

DR. R. MACDONALD asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether the balance remaining in hand of the "Greenwich Sixpences' Fund" (contributed to by seamen for five years previous to December 31st, 1834) is large enough to enable him to increase the pensions of the small number of interested seamen that now survive?

MR. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT (A LORD of the ADMIRALTY) (Sheffield, Ecclesall) (who replied) said, that there was no such Fund as the Greenwich Sixpences' Fund now in existence. The claims of merchant seamen were fully investigated in 1881, and it was shown that the benefits received far exceeded the amount of the contributions.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—EXTRA PAY TO THE MILITARY.

MR. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the Secretary of State for War, If the soldiers employed in suppressing the riots in Belfast have had extra pay granted to them; and, if not, will he consider the claims they undoubtedly have considering the arduous duties imposed upon them?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The case of the soldiers engaged in suppressing the riots at Belfast has been considered. I am not, however, able to sanction the grant of extra pay; because, although the duty was a disagreeable one, it was part of the ordinary functions of a soldier in support of the civil power.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, Whether he is aware that the police constables, whose ordinary duty it is far more than a soldier's to suppress disturbances of this kind, received an extra allowance of 3s. 6d. per day?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I am not aware of the circumstance mentioned by the hon. Member.

THE PACIFIC PORTS—ILL-USAGE OF BRITISH SEAMEN.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he has any information as to the ill-usage of British seamen in the ports on the Pacific coast,

and if any representations to that effect have been made to the Foreign Office, either direct or through the Board of Trade; and, if so, what measures are proposed to be taken?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): If some indication could be given as to the time and place where the alleged ill-usage occurred, inquiry will be made; but no such representations have been received lately.

PRIVY COUNCIL (IRELAND)—DATES OF MEETING, AUGUST, 1886, TO JANUARY, 1887.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will lay upon the Table, a Return giving the following particulars with respect to the Privy Council of Ireland:—Dates of meetings held from 1st August 1886 to 31st January 1887, inclusive; and names of Members of the Council present at each such meeting?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): A Notice of every meeting of the Privy Council in Ireland is invariably published in the Dublin newspapers on the following day. That Notice includes the name of every Member present at the meeting. There can, therefore, be no difficulty in getting the information asked for in the Question; but an official Return can be prepared, if it is thought worth while to move for it. Perhaps the House will permit me, as certain statements have been very widely made in this House and out of it, to say that it is a complete delusion to suppose that the learned Judges who happen to be Members of the Privy Council do any act or give any advice in the slightest way influencing the action of the Executive, much less have anything to do with the decisions as to the initiation of prosecutions. I dare say the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Morley) will bear me out in that statement.

MR. JOHN MORLEY assented.

SEA FISHERIES—COLLECTION OF STATISTICS.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the importance attached to the systematic collection of sea fishery statistics by the Royal

Commission of 1864, the Parliamentary Commission of 1878, and the Royal Commission of 1885, and of the time which has elapsed since the receipt of two of these recommendations, the Board of Trade will present to Parliament at an early date the statistics supplied to the Department by the Coastguards and other officials at the different fishing ports and villages in England during the past year; and whether the Government will also obtain a further Return of the tonnage of fish conveyed inland by the various Railway Companies for the year 1886?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The hon. Member will find that the information he desires is contained in the Statistical Tables and Memorandum relating to the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom—a Return which was laid on the Table of the House on the 14th instant, and which will very shortly be circulated. A monthly Return as to English Sea Fisheries has also been issued and circulated by the Board of Trade since the beginning of last year; and this Return is now published monthly, along with a corresponding Return for Scotland supplied by the Scotch Fishery Board in the *Board of Trade Journal*.

THE SLAVE TRADE—REVIVAL IN THE SOUDAN AND THE RED SEA LITTORAL.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has recently received information regarding an increase of the Slave Trade from the Soudan and on the Red Sea Littoral; and, whether Her Majesty's Government are taking any steps in regard to that trade?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Slave Trade continues, notwithstanding all efforts to suppress it; but there is no reason to believe that it has recently increased. On the contrary, Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah reports that he believes it to have decreased owing to the watchfulness of the British cruisers. The Consular and Naval officers are doing their best, and it is not believed that it is necessary to take further steps.

Mr. Rowntree

ROYAL COMMISSION ON DEPRESSION OF TRADE AND AGRICULTURE—THE REPORT.

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he will have the final Report of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Agriculture printed in a form cheaper and more accessible to the mass of the people?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am glad to inform my hon. Friend that some weeks ago I gave directions for the issue separately, at a low price, of the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Agriculture; and I am informed that, in accordance with that direction, the Reports have been printed without the evidence, and have been on sale since the 9th instant at the price of 6d.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—MANUFACTURE AND FALSE MARKING OF GOODS AT SHEFFIELD.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the statements made by the Deputation from Sheffield to the President of the Board of Trade, on Saturday the 12th instant, as to the extent of the fraudulent nature of the manufacture and false marking of goods prevailing in the Sheffield industries; and, whether, as there is reason to believe that similar practices prevail in other industries to such an extent as to cause serious loss to our Foreign trade, the Government will appoint a Royal Commission, with power to take evidence on oath, to ascertain the extent of the evil, and to obtain such information as will enable effective legislation to be framed to deal with the subject?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have read the statements made by a deputation from Sheffield to the President of the Board of Trade relative to fraudulent manufacture and false marking of goods. Her Majesty's Government have not been made aware by evidence communicated to them that these practices prevailed to such a considerable extent in other industries as would justify them in proposing to Parliament the

appointment of a Royal Commission to take evidence on oath; but they are quite prepared to give full consideration to any information that may be brought before them. They will also press on the legislation which they have already announced to Parliament to protect the industries of this country from such a system of fraud, and without waiting for the help of a Royal Commission, which would probably cause a delay of from two to three years before effective legislation was possible. I must, however, express my surprise that, as the evils of which the hon. Gentleman complains are not alleged to be the growth of the last few months, the hon. Gentleman did not, if he was of the same mind 12 months ago, use his influence with the Government of which he was a Member to secure a Royal Commission.

MR. COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe) said, he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he had considered, or would consider, the precedent set with reference to the same town in the year 1867, when Commissioners were appointed on the 23rd of May and reported on the 2nd of August; and, whether the same course might not be now pursued, the manufacturers, instead of the workmen, being now the culprits?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I would invite evidence of any practices which would justify Her Majesty's Government in proposing to Parliament a Bill of the character that the hon. Gentleman suggests; but inasmuch as no such evidence has yet been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government they do not feel justified in making that proposal.

INDIA—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is true, as reported in *The Times*, that 25,000 prisoners have been released from the gaols of India, in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee; what proportion of the released prisoners were confined for political offences, and what proportion were ordinary criminals; and, whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to advise Her Majesty to further manifest the Royal

clemency during the Jubilee Year by granting an amnesty to prisoners confined in Ireland for political and agrarian offences? The hon. Member also asked, whether it was the intention of the Government to advise Her Majesty to extend the same clemency to prisoners in British prisons?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH), (Strand, Westminster): I have to reply that the release of prisoners in India is a matter entirely within the power and discretion of the Viceroy. It is a general Oriental custom to celebrate occasions of public rejoicing by the release of prisoners; and about 16,000 were released on the occasion of the Proclamation of Her Majesty as Empress of India in the year 1877. No official information has been received at the India Office on the subject; but a Report has been asked for. I have to answer the latter part of the Question of the hon. Gentleman by saying that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Advisers to recommend the Queen to extend this ancient Oriental custom to the United Kingdom.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is a general Oriental custom on the occasion of Jubilees to burn down the houses of the subjects of Oriental Potentates?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked, Whether there were any instances on record of similar clemency being shown in this country?

[No reply.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—"VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS."

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne), asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether arrangements can be made that Answers given by Ministers to Questions asked in the House, often of great public importance, may be published and circulated in the "Votes and Proceedings" for information of Members; seeing that such answers are generally imperfectly reported in the Press, and often inaudible in the House itself, and are not recorded in the Journals of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH), (Strand, Westminster): I entertain the view which is held by many hon. Members that a considerable eco-

nomy of public time might be effected if Questions which are not of great public importance were not replied to in this House. That is a matter for the consideration of the House itself; but I cannot share with my hon. and gallant Friend the opinion he expresses that the newspapers do not report Answers to Questions of great public importance with accuracy. On the contrary, I believe that they report with great accuracy generally the replies to Questions on subjects of public importance.

INCOME TAX—FOREIGN COMPANIES TRADING IN ENGLAND.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, By what means it is proposed to charge Income Tax upon the profits of a Foreign Company or firm trading in this country when such Company or firm is only represented by an agent; and when the goods are not invoiced to or through such agent, but invoiced direct to the purchasing firm by the Foreign Company or firm?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is impossible to answer the Question fully at the present time, as it refers to matters which are subjects of appeal to the High Court of Justice. But, speaking generally, the tax would be charged by means of assessment on the agent of the foreign firm or Company in this country.

PUBLIC BUSINESS—RAILWAY RATES AND LAND REFORM—LEGISLATION.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he can inform the House when the Bills promised in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech, dealing with Railway Rates and Land Reform, will be introduced into Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Bills referred to by the hon. Member will be introduced as soon as sufficient progress is made in the Business already before the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE QUEEN'S SPEECH—REPORT.

Report of Address *brought up*, and read a first and second time.

Mr. W. H. Smith

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) said, he did not intend to proceed with the Amendment in reference to the condition of agriculture, which had been postponed, at the suggestion of the First Lord of the Treasury, till the Report stage of the Address; but he took this opportunity of stating that it was his intention to submit this important matter to the notice of the House on a future occasion.

BULGARIA—ABDICATION OF PRINCE ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG.

AMENDMENT.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton), in rising to move, as an Amendment, to insert, at the end of the 3rd paragraph—

"But, at the same time, humbly to express to Your Majesty that steps taken on behalf of your Government, without the concurrence of the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, to prevent the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, were not in accordance with the interests of this country, and were fraught with danger to the peace of Europe,"

said, he was afraid that, in speaking on the subject of this Amendment, he should be obliged to weary the House. But it was necessary to do so. He complained of certain acts of Her Majesty's Government, and these acts were recorded in a Blue Book; and it, therefore, became necessary for him to read copiously from the Blue Book in order to establish his case. Originally Bulgaria was a province of Turkey, and Russia desired to free Bulgaria from the rule of the Turks. At that time the Conservative Party were in power, and did their utmost to prevent the Russians from freeing the Bulgarians. The Russians, however, were successful, and the Treaty of San Stefano was signed. By that Treaty Bulgaria and Roumelia were united together, and a considerable portion of Macedonia was freed from the Turks. Her Majesty's late Government came forward, and insisted on a Conference being held at Berlin, when another Treaty was also signed, by which Macedonia was left still under the rule of the Turks; while Bulgaria was divided into two States—Eastern Roumelia and Bulgaria. It was now admitted, even by the Conservatives themselves, that this was a great mistake, and that, if Russia was anxious to extend her territory, and trying for a large stake in

Turkey, we were playing her game by establishing two separate States instead of one large State. The Treaty of San Stefano was signed and the Treaty, of Berlin was signed. After this Prince Alexander was selected by Europe as the Ruler of Bulgaria. He was at that time a *protégé* of the Russian Government. When he went there—he referred to this because there was a good deal of interest attached to Prince Alexander, especially by the noble Marquess the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury)—the first thing he did was to swear to the Constitution. His second act was to violate the Constitution. He almost commenced his Reign with a *coup d'état*, in which he imprisoned and banished the men who were accused of imprisoning and banishing him. The two Provinces then were united. Then the Servian war broke out, and that war was entirely due to the refusal of the Conservative Government of the day to concede the union of the two Principalities. A year ago Russia disapproved of this union, and, as he understood, Her Majesty's Government approved of it, as did the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). In Bulgaria itself there were two Parties. One was the Panslavist Party, which was grateful to Russia and wished to be under the hegemony. The other Party was opposed to Russia because they thought their independence was in danger. The latter was now called, he believed, the "English Party," who were opposed to the paramount sway which Russia seemed anxious to exercise in Bulgarian affairs. Now he (Mr. Labouchere) came to the Blue Books. On the 21st of August the Prince was seized and removed out of the country. At that time Sir Frank Lascelles, Her Majesty's Representative in Bulgaria, was absent on leave, and Mr. Condie Stephen—a clerk in the Foreign Office—was sent to represent him. Mr. Condie Stephen was a sort of stormy petrel who was kept in the Foreign Office; and whenever it was thought desirable to stir up public feeling in any part of Europe against Russia, Mr. Condie Stephen was sent to aid and abet. The first information received by Her Majesty's Government of the revolution, appeared to have been a despatch from Sir Savile Lumley to the late Lord Iddes-

leigh—whose name he was obliged to introduce, although without any desire of reflecting upon the actions of that statesman. On August 23 the late Lord Iddesleigh telegraphed to Sir Edward Thornton a very sensible message, to the effect that he had not seen Lord Salisbury, and that the Government could do nothing till they were in possession of the facts. But that course was not continued, and action was taken before the Foreign Office was in possession of the facts; because on August 23 Sir Augustus Paget telegraphed from Vienna that the attitude of the Bulgarian people was one of "complete apathy," and mentioned that the troops had sworn fidelity to the new Government. The telegram went on—

"In view of this general indifference, and of the conspiracy embracing men of all political parties, Count Kalnoky said he did not see what can be done in favour of the Prince."—(Turkey, No. 1, 1887, p. 86.)

What was the conduct of Mr. Condie Stephen during that time? Revolutions took place in other countries; but it was not the business of the British Envoy to interfere. He recognized the Government *de facto*. But Mr. Condie Stephen seemed to have known perfectly well the views which his Government entertained; so in a telegram received on the 26th August he wrote that, as he feared Prince Alexander might be exposed to dangers, he had insisted on seeing the military leader, and had told him that he was responsible for the Prince's safety, as the *coup d'état* had been a military one. What business had Mr. Condie Stephen to do this? And he proceeded—

"I declined to discuss the political side of the question; but I demanded to know whereabouts of his Highness, and details of what had taken place, as British Representative accredited to Prince Alexander."—(*Ibid.*, p. 98.)

Mr. Condie Stephen went on to state that he took steps independently of his Colleagues, who seemed little inclined to move in any way without having received instructions. That was to say, that the Representatives of the other European Powers were more wise, and did not take any active steps which might compromise their Governments one way or the other. On the 25th of August, three days after the revolution, Lord Iddesleigh telegraphed to Sir Edward Thornton, in strong terms, to do what he could

in favour of Prince Alexander's return to Bulgaria. On the 26th of August Lord Iddesleigh telegraphed to Sir Savile Lumley—

"Impress upon the Porte with great earnestness that it would be politic on their part, now that Prince Alexander has recovered his freedom, to summon his Highness to return to the Principality in order to restore order there."—(*Ibid*, p. 101.)

Then, on the 27th, was received the first of a long series of snubs from the Powers of Europe to this country. This was from the Italian Government, for on that day Sir Savile Lumley wrote that Count Robilant thought it desirable to await the issue of the meeting between M. de Giers and Prince Bismarck, which would probably be followed by some proposal if they came to an understanding. Meanwhile, Mr. Condie Stephen was taking active steps in favour of Prince Alexander. The Government kept applying first to one Power and then to another, and all with the same result. In fact, this country was the only one in Europe which concerned itself in any way on behalf of Prince Alexander. Prince Alexander returned to Bulgaria on the 29th August, after having wandered about Europe; and it was obvious that some non-official communications had taken place between him and Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Kennedy, our Representative at Bucharest, writing to Lord Iddesleigh, said that the Prince's chaplain, who was to meet him at Lemberg, would "urge him in the strongest terms to return without delay." He (Mr. Labouchere) supposed that Mr. Kennedy had been told to urge this, and very likely other means had also been adopted; because about this time Sir Edward Malet wrote a despatch to Lord Iddesleigh, of which only an extract appeared in the Blue Book, in which it was said that Prince Bismarck continued to hold that the interests of Germany were not primarily engaged in Bulgaria, and that the policy of Germany would still be directed to the preservation of peace. That was No. 232 in the Blue Book. Then there was the despatch of Lord Iddesleigh to Sir Augustus Paget dated August 30. This despatch confirmed the fact that there had been private communications with Prince Alexander. To the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, who wished to know whether the Prince was acting according

to his own judgment or on the advice of Her Majesty's Government; Lord Iddesleigh replied that the Government had not been in official communication with him. That was very likely true, the phrase "official communication" having a special meaning in the language of diplomacy; but the statement by no means proved that there had not been communications. From the despatches sent at the time by Sir Frank Lascelles, Mr. Condie Stephen, and other of Her Majesty's Representatives, one would suppose that the whole Bulgarian nation were in favour of the Prince's return to the Throne. The Prince himself, however, told Sir Francis Lascelles that the military conspiracy was much more extended than had been at first supposed—that the Army was highly disorganized, and that he could place no reliance on the civilians. When the Prince made these statements, he recognized that it would be impossible for him to remain in Bulgaria without the support of Russia, and that Lord Salisbury was contemplating a course which must involve us in war. On September 2 Prince Alexander wrote to the Czar, saying that, as his Crown had been given to him by Russia, he was prepared to resign it at her bidding; and the Czar replied, that he could not approve the Prince's return to Bulgaria, and that it would probably result in fresh disasters. The Government learnt on the same day that the Prince had placed his Throne at the disposal of the Russian Emperor, and yet Lord Iddesleigh sent despatches to our Representatives at Berlin and Vienna, in which he said a point had been reached when it was of great importance that the Powers should be consulted; that it was possible, if time were lost, other Powers might take the initiative in a sense unfavourable to what the Government deemed to be the real interests of Europe, or that some untoward event might occur to cause confusion. Lord Iddesleigh then intimated that the Government were in favour of supporting Prince Alexander, and charged our Representatives with the duty of at once consulting the German and Austrian Ministers for Foreign Affairs. It was plain that at this time the Government wished to enter into an alliance with Germany and Austria against Russia, the object of the alliance being to main-

tain Prince Alexander on the Throne of Bulgaria. But the despatch did not meet with very great favour at the Courts to which it was addressed. Count Bismarck told Sir Edward Malet that Prince Bismarck could not advise the formation of an alliance such as was proposed; and that his opinion was that, although Prince Alexander had been placed upon the Throne by the Great Powers, it was not incumbent upon them to maintain him in his position either jointly or separately. To Sir Augustus Paget Count Kalnoky said, that the Czar's answer to Prince Alexander left no hope that he would listen to any proposal in favour of the Prince, who, it was also evident, would not be supported by Germany; that the Prince was so discouraged and depressed that it was very doubtful whether he himself desired to remain in Bulgaria; and that, in the circumstances, the only thing to be done was to await the development of events. This, however, was precisely what Her Majesty's Government would not do. On September 6, Sir Frank Lascelles, who was then in Bulgaria, telegraphed as follows—

"I am convinced that His Highness's presence is likely to prevent disorder, whereas his departure would probably be the signal for an outbreak of something that would resemble a civil war, which might furnish Russia with a pretext for a military occupation of the country."

The Earl of Iddesleigh at once telegraphed back—

"I have received your telegram of the 6th instant informing me of a suggestion of Prince Alexander that a European Commission should be appointed to administer the country on his departure. The difficulties in which both Bulgaria and Europe would be involved through the abdication of Prince Alexander, are of so serious a nature that Her Majesty's Government desire you earnestly to urge upon His Highness that he should remain and guide the country through the present crisis."—(*Ibid*, p. 138.)

At this time Mr. Condie Stephen was in England, and he wished, with reference to that gentleman's presence here, to put the following definite Question to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs—Did Mr. Condie Stephen receive a letter from Lord Iddesleigh addressed to an eminent financial house in the City, and did he go with this letter of introduction to the firm referred to, and say that it was desirable that the firm should enable him to obtain for Bulgaria a loan of £500,000; and that, if they could

obtain the loan, the Bulgarians would do their best to prevent a Russian occupation? To this question he wanted a specific answer. On September 2nd Lord Iddesleigh had said that he did not think that Russia was especially concerned in the affairs of Bulgaria. By the 8th of the month, however, he must have changed his opinion. Sir Robert Morier telegraphed to the noble Earl on the 7th an account of an interview with M. de Giers. The Russian Minister told Sir Robert Morier that he feared we had not calculated on the dangers and misfortunes which would certainly accrue to all concerned, and more especially to the Prince, if we succeeded in our enterprise and restored him to his Throne. But this was, however, our concern—not his; that Russia had no intention whatever to interfere; that the Emperor had said so, and would keep his word. Asked whether, if we were to succeed in restoring the Prince, the Emperor would be likely to reconsider his decision, and to become reconciled to his kinsman, M. de Giers, with unusual warmth, replied that this could never be.

"I could form no idea," he said, "of the intensity of the hatred animating every class of the Russian class, from the highest to the lowest, against the Prince which late events had revealed; and of which he himself had had no adequate conception till he had, as it were, come into bodily contact with it when recrossing three days before the Russian frontier."

He challenged disproof of the charge that while Prince Alexander was in Bulgaria the Government did everything in their power to induce him to remain there in defiance of Russia. On September 7th the Prince left Bulgaria. On the 8th of September Lord Iddesleigh addressed a circular-note to Her Majesty's Representatives abroad, requesting them to ascertain whether a communication from the Porte had been received by the Russian Government, in which the Great Powers were asked to join in an assurance to the Bulgarian Government that the conditions guaranteed to Bulgaria by Treaty should be secured, and that no foreign intervention should take place in the Principality. Lord Iddesleigh was practically inviting the Powers to join in a crusade against Russia. Her Majesty's Government received a severe snub. Sir Augustus Paget telegraphed—

"The Austrian Government will place itself in communication with the other Powers; but

in the meantime, declares that it places itself now, as always, on the basis of existing treaties; that there will be no intervention whatever on its part, and that it hopes and is persuaded there will be none on the part of any other Power. Such intervention would be contrary to its views."

M. de Freycinet said he had—

"Merely answered verbally that he could certainly assure the Porte that France had no intention of intervening."

Mr. Scott, the *Chargé d'Affaires*, telegraphed from Berlin, September 9—

"I have the honour to report that on the receipt of your lordship's telegram of yesterday's date, inquiring whether the Imperial Government had received a communication from the Sublime Porte on the Bulgarian questions, and, if so, what reply the Imperial Government proposed to make to it; I had an interview with Count Bismarck, who informed me that the Turkish circular in question had been communicated to him to-day. His Excellency read it to me, and said that he had given a verbal reply to the Turkish Ambassador, to the effect that it did not seem necessary for the Imperial Government to return a direct answer to the first part of the circular; that, although the fact had not as yet been officially notified to the Powers, Prince Alexander appeared to have already quitted Bulgaria; that the Sultan ought to be satisfied with the distinct and satisfactory assurances given by the Russian Government that it had no intention of intervening in Bulgaria, and Germany had certainly no such intention. With regard to the question addressed by the Porte to the Powers generally, Count Bismarck informed the Turkish Ambassador that the Imperial Government could not give a reply without previously consulting with the other Powers. Count Bismarck then expressed to me his private opinion that if it was the intention of the Porte to ask the Powers for a joint assurance guaranteeing the treaty conditions of Bulgaria the Chancellor would decline to give it, as useless, remembering the official interpretation placed by Her Majesty's Government in the case of Luxemburg upon the obligations of a joint guarantee; but, that he considered that the Treaty of Berlin, which, until altered by general consent, remained in full force, ought to be sufficient security to satisfy both the Sultan and the Bulgarian Government."

Lord Iddesleigh having sent round a Circular suggesting that some guarantee should be given by certain of the Powers that Bulgaria should not be occupied by Russia; France, Germany, and Austria refused to give any such guarantee. A Council of Regency was appointed in Bulgaria pending the election, and Russia sent General Kaulbars thither. The despatches were full of denunciation of the action of General Kaulbars. Our consuls and agents seemed to consider it their business to interfere in every way to impede General Kaulbars. Russia

denied the legality of the Assembly which was to be called together, and technically Russia appeared to have been right, for representatives were to be sent from Eastern Roumelia, contrary to the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin. General Kaulbars demanded three things of the Bulgarian Government—first the raising of the state of siege; secondly the release of all prisoners implicated in the disturbances; and the postponement of the elections for the National Assembly. The Bulgarian Government were willing to concede the first point, but no others. General Kaulbars pointed out as to the second point that—

"As the present Government was merely a party Government, it had not the right of judging Members of a party politically opposed to it."

Then Lord Iddesleigh on September 30 telegraphed to Her Majesty's representatives abroad another Circular, in which he said—

"The embarrassment of the situation is largely due to the facts that the election of a successor to the late ruler of Bulgaria has not yet taken place; while, at the same time, not only must the ordinary business of administration be carried on, but some questions of the gravest importance must be dealt with, such as that of the trial of persons charged with complicity in the forcible abduction of Prince Alexander. The Bulgarian Foreign Minister points out that the Government cannot comply with some of the demands addressed to it by the Russian Agent and Consul General without violating the Constitution; and it is evident that the infringement of the Constitution at a crisis such as the present is a serious matter and ought not to be resorted to without careful consideration and a proved necessity. It appears to Her Majesty's Government that it is very desirable that the elections should take place as early as may be, so as to shorten the time during which the Administration is weakened by the vacancy of the throne. But, whether this be so or not, they are strongly of opinion that the Great Powers should give their earliest attention to the condition of the country, and should offer to the Bulgarian Government such advice as they may think calculated to meet the exigencies of the case."—(*Ibid*, p. 186.)

Sir Savile Lumley, from Rome, telegraphed—

"The instructions which have been sent to the Italian representative at Sofia are of a general character—namely, to gain time, and to avoid pressing for the elections, which cannot take place until the Powers have arrived at an agreement as to the candidate to be proposed for the throne of Bulgaria."

Sir Augustus Paget telegraphed, October 2—

"In compliance with your Lordship's instructions, I have to-day communicated to Count Kalnoky a copy of your telegram of September 30th. His Excellency, while agreeing in the general principles therein expressed, is nevertheless disinclined to give advice to the Bulgarian Government on any specific point; and referred to M. Tisza's recent speech as being a full and clear enunciation of Austrian policy, which he believes would have an effect at Sofia as well as elsewhere. Count Kalnoky went on to say that, in his opinion, things were tending towards a compromise between the Bulgarian Government and General Kaulbars; and that this might possibly be marred by the other Powers supporting the Bulgarian Government in opposition to Russian demands."—(*Ibid*, p. 189.)

Sir Edward Malet replied to Lord Iddesleigh, October 2—

"I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have this day addressed a note to Count Bismarck, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the words of your Lordship's telegram of the 30th ult., stating the views of Her Majesty's Government in regard to the state of affairs in Bulgaria."—(*Ibid*, p. 191.)

No reply was ever received from Prince Bismarck. He refused to reply to such nonsense. He knew that we were trying to get up an alliance against Russia and to force on a war between Austria and Russia, and he would have nothing to do with it. About this time Her Majesty's Government appeared to have fallen out with Turkey. It was manifest from Lord Iddesleigh's telegram to Sir William White, of October 11, that Turkey had, before this, pointed out how absurd it was for England to take up such an attitude with regard to the occupation of Bulgaria by Russia, while England herself was occupying Egypt and threatening to remain there. On October 12, Lord Iddesleigh sent another Circular to the Great Powers. In it he transmitted copies of two telegrams received from Her Majesty's Agent and Consul General at Sofia—

"The first of these gives an account of disturbances caused at the elections at Sofia by a band of men from the neighbouring villages, who subsequently took refuge in the Russian Embassy, and of the attitude of the Russian Acting Agent on this occasion. The second telegram reports that the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs had confidentially addressed the Agents of the Powers, begging that their Governments would take the affairs of Bulgaria into immediate consideration. I have to request you to inquire whether the Government to which you are accredited have received information similar to that contained in Sir F. Lascelles' telegrams, and what view they take of the proceedings which he reports, and of the situation described in the communication received from the Bulgarian Government."—(*Ibid*, p. 203.)

That was to say, having been snubbed again and again, Her Majesty's Government now send another Circular, asking—"Have you received a certain communication," which, of course, the foreign Governments had received. Sir Augustus Paget replied on the 13th—

"I have spoken to Count Kalnoky on the subject of Sir Frank Lascelles' telegrams of the previous day. The information contained in the first had appeared in the public telegrams here; but His Excellency told me that he had heard nothing from the Austrian Agent at Sofia relative to the request of the Bulgarian Government that the Great Powers should take the affairs of Bulgaria into their immediate consideration, with a view to putting an end to the interregnum. Count Kalnoky went on to say that he was not disposed at present to go further in the way of remonstrance with the Russian Government than he has already done."—(*Ibid*, p. 210.)

The reply of Italy was still stronger. Count Robilant said that the Italian Government had received information similar to that contained in Sir Frank Lascelles' telegrams, and added—

"As the interests of Italy in Bulgaria were unimportant, she would restrict her action within the limits of the Berlin Treaty, according to which the only point now requiring consideration is the election of a Successor to Prince Alexander."

M. de Freycinet, replying on behalf of France, said—

"He would take into consideration the views of the various Governments if they were made; but at present he was in the dark, and certainly could not advance his views."

On the 27th of October the Assembly met. It was then urged by Her Majesty's Government that they were exceedingly anxious that this Assembly should be recognized by the Representatives of the major portion of the Great Powers, and that they should go to Tirnova. Gadban Effendi was sent to Turkey, and in the end England was snubbed again, as she had been throughout these proceedings. The Powers absolutely refused to send their Ministers or the Secretaries; and this Representative Assembly, which was stated to be illegal by Russia, and which neither Austria nor Germany were prepared to say was illegal, was opened without any Representative from England or the other Powers. He really felt for the Government at receiving these successive snubs. On October 20 Lord Iddesleigh received a despatch from Sir Frank Lascelles, in which it was stated—

"Gadban Effendi returned to Sofia last night. He has applied to the Regents for the postponement of the Convocation of the great National Assembly; at all events, until General Kaulbars, who is expected to arrive at Sofia on Friday morning, shall have had time to communicate any fresh instructions he may have received. Gadban Effendi has also given it to be understood that Turkey and Russia have come to a complete understanding on the Bulgarian Question."—(*Ibid*, p. 224.)

One would have thought that Her Majesty's Government were ashamed at the humiliation of sending these Circulars. Not a bit of it. On the 26th of October another Circular was sent to Her Majesty's Representatives at Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Rome, and St. Petersburg, along with which copies of two telegrams from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople were transmitted—

"Relative to an announcement made yesterday to the Porte by the Russian Ambassador that his Government proposed to send two ships of war to Varna for the protection of their Consul and the Russian community at that port."

This was a last despairing effort. The only answer which he had been able to find was from Sir Augustus Paget, dated Vienna, October 27. The other Governments were tired of replying to those despatches, and they had evidently come to the conclusion to take no notice of them. Count Kalnoky, having been asked what view he took of the despatch of Russian vessels to Varna, replied that—

"According to the statement of the Russian Government they were small vessels sent for the protection of the Consul at his own request. He did not, therefore, see what objections could be raised, as there was, no doubt, considerable excitement among the population against Russia. His Excellency further remarked that he did not consider it as a preliminary step to a Russian occupation of Bulgaria, more especially as any such intention was disclaimed in the announcement made to the Porte of the despatch of the two corvettes to Varna."—(*Ibid*, p. 245.)

He had now brought the proceedings down to November, which was a most important date for the House to bear in mind, because it would be remembered that Lord Salisbury on the 9th of November made a very bellicose speech at the Guildhall. On November 5th Sir Augustus Paget telegraphed to Lord Iddesleigh—

"With reference to the language used by Dr. Smolka, President of the Austrian, and Count Tisza, President of the Hungarian, Delegation, in their opening address at Pesth yesterday, I have the honour to report that the

organs of the Vienna press credited with enjoying official inspiration are seeking to attenuate the importance attached by public opinion to Dr. Smolka's words, which are regarded as being of a very inflammatory character, and all responsibility for them is repudiated on the part of the common Government. The fact of Dr. Smolka being of Polish nationality, and his advanced age is, perhaps, calculated to account for the tenour of his language, which cannot fail to cause embarrassment to Count Kalnoky at the present juncture. If credence is to be attached to the information which reaches me from reliable sources, the common Government does not yet contemplate any change in the policy of reserve which it has hitherto pursued in the Bulgarian Question; and were it the case it seems highly improbable that they would so suddenly have selected Dr. Smolka as their mouthpiece."—(*Ibid*, p. 251.)

A few days afterwards the Emperor of Austria made a speech to the Delegations at Pesth. Mr. Kennedy sent this account of it—

"This speech from the Throne is something of a sedative, as compared with the more alarmist cry sounded, especially by the President of the Hungarian Delegation, in the inaugural addresses, with the substance of which I had the honour to acquaint your Excellency in my previous despatch reporting the meeting of the Delegations. It was received with applause by the Austrian Delegation, particularly the passage expressing hope for the maintenance of peace and of the interests of Austro-Hungary."

Lord Salisbury had these facts before him, therefore, when he went to the Guildhall. He knew very well that he had tried to stir up a war in Europe and had failed; that Prince Bismarck was protesting by silence against his action; that Austria refused to have anything to do with it; and that the Sultan had come to an arrangement with Russia in regard to the Principality. Yet Lord Salisbury went to the Guildhall, and, after speaking of the revolution which had broken out in Bulgaria, he alluded to "conspirators debauched with foreign gold"—that was to say, the gold of Russia. He did not think this was fitting language to be used in regard to a Power by a Prime Minister who was anxious to maintain the peace of Europe. On that occasion Lord Salisbury said—

"In the present case the immediate interests of England are not engaged. In this matter Austria is on the look out. The opinion and judgment of Austria must weigh with enormous weight in the councils of Her Majesty's Government; and the policy which Austria pursues will contribute very largely to shape the policy which England will also pursue."

That was to say, Lord Salisbury was

urging Austria to go to war, and here he promised that Austria was to decide upon the policy of England—that if Austria would only go to war for a matter in which the noble Marquess himself said the immediate interests of England were not engaged, he would come to the aid of Austria, would join with Austria in a war against Russia—a war which would very soon lead to a European conflagration. There was very little in the Blue Book about Prince Waldemar's election beyond a declaration that Russia would not recognize it. In regard to the election of the Prince of Mingrelia, a telegraphic despatch from the Porte, dated Constantinople, December 3, said—

“The Bulgarian people have naturally given their anxious attention to the question of the vacancy of the throne of the Principality, and have already had recourse to the Suzerain Court their supreme legitimate authority, to indicate a candidate to them for election. Meanwhile, the Imperial Government of Russia has proposed to us the candidature of the Prince of Mingrelia, and the Imperial Government, having ascertained that there is no reason for declining this proposal, has given its adhesion to it with a view to a prompt settlement of the question, being persuaded that the other Powers in their turn will not refuse their assent.”—(Turkey, No. 2, 1887, p. 2.)

In a despatch to Sir William White Lord Iddesleigh replied that—

“Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that it would be most in accordance with the course of procedure prescribed in the Treaty of Berlin on the occasion of the original constitution of the Principality that these deliberations should precede any decision as to the choice of the new ruler. The accounts which have been received by Her Majesty's Government give reason to doubt whether the candidature of the Prince of Mingrelia would be favourably received by the people of Bulgaria. They are, moreover, without information as to the conditions on which the Russian Government would be ready to recognize his election, and they cannot, under the circumstances, undertake to join the Turkish Government in recommending the Prince at Sofia for election.”—(*Ibid.*, p. 7.)

With this despatch the Blue Book came to an end. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) asked a question the other day as to whether the despatches subsequent to that date would be laid on the Table of the House. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied that he did not think it expedient to do so. He could quite understand why the right hon. Baronet did not think it expedient, and that the Government were

thoroughly ashamed of this Blue Book. He could quite understand the reticences in that Blue Book. He believed their shame would be greater, that they would be driven out of power, even by the Unionists, if all the despatches were to be published. He thought he had conclusively shown that there had been one long attempt on the part of Lord Iddesleigh and the Government to stir up war against Russia. [“Oh, oh!”] The Blue Book was full of it, and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs when he got up a few minutes hence would probably boast of it. But whether or not he boasted of it, *litera scripta manet*. He appealed to any Gentleman of independent mind, like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, whether he had not shown that the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in this matter had been scandalous and even disgraceful. He did not know why at the present time they were to have no more Blue Books. It almost led him to suppose that there was a hidden reason for it. Just as when Hanover formed part of the dominion of the King of England, we were perpetually interfering in Germany, avowedly for the sake of England, but really for the sake of Hanover; so one would really suppose that there were some sort of dynastic reasons for our urging again and again that this obscure German Prince who had been set over Bulgaria should remain there. Lord Iddesleigh, unfortunately, was no more; but he had no doubt that that noble Lord exercised some restraining influence over Lord Salisbury. At the present time, Lord Salisbury had no such restraining influence. As Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury appealed to the Prime Minister, and as Prime Minister Lord Salisbury gave every decision in his favour. Therefore, the Opposition would not be doing its duty if it allowed these Blue Books to pass unnoticed. There was no necessity for England to engage in foreign wars, which, to use the language of Lord Salisbury, had no immediate interest for her. That Lord Salisbury was a very able Minister he had no doubt, but most unquestionably, next to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett), he was the greatest Russophobe in the whole world. He seemed to have it on the brain. It would be remembered how, when in

power before with Lord Beaconsfield, he squandered money broadcast in bringing over troops from India in order to try to get us into a war with Russia; and unless they protested against it, he would eventually, if we gave him uncontrolled power, force us into a war in which we had no concern. He protested against these perpetual wars and against the Executive Government being able to force us into a war without consulting the House. Readers of Mr. Greville's memoirs would perhaps remember that Lord Clarendon told Mr. Greville that the Crimean war was caused entirely by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who forced the war upon us. What would it have been if Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, instead of being Ambassador at Constantinople, had been at once Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of England? He regarded the present conjuncture as a serious danger, and in order to acquit hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House from the wars which undoubtedly would take place if Lord Salisbury's hand was not checked, he should divide the House upon the question.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to second the Motion.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the 3rd paragraph, to insert the words—"But, at the same time, humbly to express to Your Majesty that steps taken on behalf of Your Government, without the concurrence of the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, to prevent the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenburg, were not in accordance with the interests of this Country, and were fraught with danger to the peace of Europe."—(Mr. Labouchere.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.) said, he did not think that the House would expect that he should entertain them with so many quotations as the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had read from the Blue Books. Lengthy quotations, he thought, rather obscured than described a policy; but the mind which ran through the whole course of the despatches of the late Lord Iddesleigh sufficiently indicated the policy of Her Majesty's Government in a very different sense from that in which it had

been represented. He thought that the words applied by the hon. Member to Lord Iddesleigh, whom he professed so much to respect, could not be justified, and that they would be repudiated by the House and the country. He did not think the Government which succeeded to a situation of difficulty only eight months ago would require to defend themselves from transactions which had passed into a very distant memory. But the House would consider that as no answer to some assertions that the hon. Member had made. He had said that some statesmen who were now earnest for the maintenance of Bulgarian independence tried hard to prevent it. Now, he had himself occasion the other night to notice the exhumation of a like forgotten calumny. He had not got to go far back to remind the House that this accusation was dealt with by the Marquess of Salisbury only a year ago, when he pointed out that the circumstances in which he had recently supported the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria were very different from those which prevailed at the time of the Treaty of Berlin. Lord Salisbury pointed out that at the time of the Treaty of Berlin, the Province of Eastern Roumelia was actually occupied by Russian troops—both Provinces indeed—and it was certainly not desirable in those circumstances that another Province should be detached from the Sultan's dominions. He also pointed out that he had himself been an advocate for a larger Bulgaria than that determined by the Treaty of Berlin; and it was only the force of circumstances in connection with the maintenance of European peace which rendered it at the time undesirable that Eastern Roumelia should be separated from the Turkish Empire, as was proposed by Bulgaria, that determined the course adopted at the Congress of Berlin. But it was a very different thing when the Bulgarians had obtained so much experience in the art of self-government and shown that they were worthy of their independence, and that the time had arrived when the two Provinces might be united, not only without detriment to the Turkish Empire but with considerable security for the maintenance of peace. He might remind the House that a statesman whom hon. Gentlemen and his Friends opposite professed to support and admire, the right hon.

Mr. Labouchere

Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), had himself expressed his high satisfaction with the conduct of Lord Salisbury in that transaction. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: For his repentance.] They might call it what they pleased; but the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had expressed his satisfaction with the conduct of Lord Salisbury at that time. The hon. Member had framed a considerable indictment against Prince Alexander. He did not know why the Prince was the hon. Member's favourite aversion; but he would have occasion to notice that in the hostility to Prince Alexander and the opposition to the course taken by the Government there had been, both by the hon. Member and by many who had taken the Russian side, a great disregard of the feelings and wishes of the people of Bulgaria. That should never be lost sight of by those who criticized the conduct of the Government. The hon. Member, in referring to the two parties in Bulgaria, spoke of them as of equal importance. The hon. Member would probably maintain that the last Election in this country was not decisive. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!] Then he was not surprised the hon. Member should maintain that the Election of the Sobranje was not decisive of the public opinion of Bulgaria. He despaired of any election carrying conviction to the mind of the hon. Member as to the feelings of the people of a country if the enormous majority—amounting, he believed, to nine-tenths of the National Assembly—was not conclusive of the desires of the people of Bulgaria. With regard to the seizure of Prince Alexander, how was it effected? There were manœuvres by which the troops were sent away from the capital. Rumours were set on foot of an anticipated attack from Servia, and these were successful in denuding the place of troops. A few conspirators had then removed the Prince in the dead of night, before the people realized the small number of those engaged. The tables were quickly turned, and despatches were sent off in hot haste to bring the Prince back. What sort of removal, what sort of crisis, was that? What had been done was reversed within three days. The hon. Member had framed an indictment, partly out of Blue Books, but, to some extent, out of his own imagination. He asked why

Mr. Condie Stephen was sent to Sofia, and had described him as a sort of stormy petrel who was sent out whenever the Tories wished to offer offence to Russia. But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Condie Stephen had been sent to Sofia by Lord Rosebery.

Mr. LABOUCHERE observed, that he had objected to such action on the part of any Government.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that, at all events, it was Lord Rosebery who had sent Mr. Condie Stephen there; and he would never have expected any suggestion that Lord Rosebery, who had filled the Foreign Office with great dignity and with great advantage to this country, could have sent him out with any sinister motive. Mr. Condie Stephen had been, no doubt, sent because he was a most capable man. It was an accident, as Sir Frank Lascelles had happened to be on leave, that Mr. Condie Stephen was sent to Bulgaria as Acting Agent and Consul General. An extraordinary accusation had been made that Mr. Condie Stephen was to have been sent back to Bulgaria if it had not been for the protest of a distinguished individual. As a matter of fact, there had been a move upwards when Sir William White had gone to Constantinople, and Sir Frank Lascelles had succeeded to the position of Minister at Bucharest, and Mr. Stephen had gone elsewhere. The hon. Member for Northampton had said a good deal as to the endeavours of Her Majesty's Government to procure supporters for Prince Alexander on his return to Bulgaria, and about the Government not having received the support which they had expected. But what was the support which the Government directed their agent at Sofia to give to Prince Alexander? In intention it was, undoubtedly, a moral and diplomatic support. The value of this kind of support was in the strength that lay behind it, and in the material strength of the Powers who gave it. When Her Majesty's Government declared their readiness to maintain their Treaty obligations, it did not follow that they were to rush at once into war. The world was governed by moral force, and he trusted that it would long continue to be so. But it was the military and material forces behind that moral force which best guaranteed peace. It was not the fact that Prince Alexander was

to be supported against an uprising of his own subjects. There was no need for that, because his subjects were enthusiastically in his favour. The hon. Member had referred to the state of things which Prince Alexander had found on his return to Bulgaria, and had asked, how could Lord Iddesleigh have urged him to remain in the face of the amount of insecurity and treachery which existed there and the opposition of the Emperor of Russia? Now, in the first place, some allowance must be made for the events immediately preceding the return of Prince Alexander. He had shown himself a gallant and capable soldier; but it might be well that his nerves had been shaken by the cruel treatment which he had experienced, and that his faith in those who had served him had been weakened by the disgraceful treachery of which he had been the victim. Was that a reason why Lord Iddesleigh should not counsel the Prince to remain and to rely upon the affections of his subjects? In the very despatch to which the hon. Member had referred Lord Iddesleigh had indicated the probable dangers to European peace which would be the result of Prince Alexander's leaving the Throne of Bulgaria empty. That agreed with the whole of Lord Iddesleigh's despatches and action, by which he held that this country was party to the Treaty of Berlin, under which the Prince was under the guardianship of the Powers who signed it. Lord Iddesleigh had never meant, and had never in any despatch implied, that this country meant to assume an isolated or special responsibility not shared in common with the other Powers. The hon. Member for Northampton had referred to the speech of Lord Salisbury on the 9th of November, in which the noble Lord said—

“The rights of Bulgaria are assured by the Berlin Treaty, the Treaty upon which the present peace of South-Eastern Europe rests. Much speculation has been used as to the attitude which this country would observe with respect to the Berlin Treaty and the violation which, in the opinion of some, it has received. This country has an interest, but it is not an isolated interest. It is a corporate interest. In combination with the Powers of Europe we have signed that Treaty. There rests upon us no isolated interest to maintain that Treaty if it should be broken. If the Powers of Europe, or any considerable portion of the Powers of Europe, recognize the duty of vindicating the

Treaty under any contingencies that may arise, I am sure that the English people will not be backward in vindicating their duty also.”

Not one word had ever been said or written which was inconsistent with the declarations made on that occasion or in public elsewhere. The hon. Member for Northampton said that Her Majesty's Government had proposed to the other Powers to enter into an alliance against Russia. There was no such proposition to be found in any of these despatches, and there was no foundation for any such report. Nothing had occurred to throw any doubt upon the good faith of the Emperor of Russia, or to lead to the assumption that Russia would not fulfil her obligations under the Treaty. It was recognized that Russia had made sacrifices for the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality, and it was only natural that the country which had made sacrifices for a certain object should possess special interest in it. It was a remarkable thing, in his opinion, that when the irregular Opposition took the line of criticism which they were now taking they forgot the part which had been taken not long ago, in season and out of season, by the distinguished Leader of the Liberal Party with regard to the independence of Bulgaria. In what they had done with regard to securing independence under the Treaty to the people of Bulgaria Her Majesty's Government were only following the traditional policy of this country. Then they had had a specific charge brought by the hon. Member for Northampton, who had said that when Mr. Condie Stephen had returned to England he had received a letter from Lord Iddesleigh to a distinguished financier as to a loan for Bulgaria.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that what was stated was that Mr. Condie Stephen had received a letter of introduction to a financial house.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he could assure the hon. Member that he had consulted Members of the Cabinet with regard to this question, in case it might be something of which he was not himself aware, although Lord Iddesleigh had always treated him with a confidence which he could never forget. Nobody, however, knew of any such transaction, or anything approaching to it, ever having taken place. Her Majesty's Government never thought of

interfering in the negotiations for any loan, and he gave the most emphatic denial to the rumour to which the hon. Member had referred. The hon. Member had referred to a despatch of M. de Giers, as showing the extreme hatred of Russia to Prince Alexander. No doubt, M. de Giers was very frank in the communication referred to, and it was manifest that the public feeling of Russia was very strong against the restoration of Prince Alexander, because he had gone against the will of the Czar. On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government desired that greater confidence should be shown towards the people of Bulgaria; but he was glad to say that the negotiations in which the views of each Government had been put forward had been conducted in a perfectly friendly spirit, and the Government of the Emperor had, more than once, acknowledged its sense of the full consideration which was exhibited by us for the peculiar position of Russia in this matter. It was a happy thing that Governments should be able to discuss with calmness questions upon which they entertained strong differences of opinion. With respect to General Kaulbars, it was impossible that Her Majesty's Government should regard with approval his proceedings in Bulgaria, because he appeared to act on the assumption that the wishes of the people of Bulgaria was not the main thing to be considered. Lord Iddesleigh's words on that subject would best explain the attitude of Her Majesty's Government. In the despatch of October 14 to Sir Robert Morier (No. 430 in the Blue Book) he wrote—

"I then went on to say that such language as that of General Kaulbars was open to objection on two grounds—firstly, because it tended to intimidate the Bulgarian people in the exercise of their constitutional duties; secondly, because it was an assumption of a right on the part of Russia to establish a separate authority in Bulgaria, which was an affront to the other Powers, parties to the Treaty of Berlin. I did not know, I said, whether the language to which I objected was the General's own, or whether it was used by order of his Government. In either case I felt bound to take exception to it."—(*Ibid*, p. 213)

Lord Iddesleigh, in another passage, went on to explain that as long as it was possible to maintain Prince Alexander he thought the wishes of the people of the country ought to be the rule of our support, and he held that the Bulgarian

people were justified in resisting any attempt to infringe or to interfere with the regular working of their Constitution. That was our policy as described by Lord Iddesleigh, and he would be surprised if the House would condemn it. He did not wish to touch upon international jealousies and international dangers, of which they knew only too much. Perhaps the description of such a state of things would only tend to aggravate the position; but this he would say—that the whole policy of Her Majesty's Government had been to maintain peace in Europe, not only at present, but for the future, and that would be best secured by adherence to the terms and obligations of Treaties. He did not wish to detain the House too long; but he must not pass by without remark some points dwelt on by the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman talked about our interference with Bulgaria. But our interference went no further than our legitimate interest. He also complained of despatches being withheld. But it was evident that when a critical state of things still existed many despatches could not be conveniently produced, because they might tend to create irritation between other Powers, and it had ever been the custom of the House of Commons to excuse the Government of the day for not producing such. There was no doubt that much reserve was necessary if we were not to aggravate evils which already existed, and the consequence of which we might deplore. The hon. Gentleman had sneered at Prince Alexander and ridiculed the endeavours of Her Majesty's Government to maintain him on the Throne according to the wishes of the people of Bulgaria, and, after his departure, to uphold the right of the people to a free election. Was the hon. Gentleman serious in thinking that Her Majesty's Government ought to have been indifferent to the wishes of the Bulgarian people? If so, the hon. Member must throw aside principles which had often been contended for by the Liberal Party, and which were common to all this nation. The people of this country were not indifferent, nor were they likely to be indifferent, in such a matter. The hon. Gentleman had asked whether Her Majesty's Government had communicated an assurance to Prince Waldemar that if elected

he would receive their support. He denied that either to Prince Waldemar or to any other candidate had Her Majesty's Government given any anterior assurance. In every case they gave the same answer—that until the election of a Prince had taken place in a Constitutional manner and had been submitted to the Treaty Powers they, as the Representatives of one of the Treaty Powers, could express no opinion as to the fitness of a candidate; but if the people of Bulgaria were decidedly opposed to the Prince of Mingrelia, they did not think that his proposal would be wise or expedient. The hon. Gentleman asked whether there were dynastic reasons which influenced the policy of Her Majesty's Government? There were no such reasons. It would have been unworthy if there were. He did not know whether the hon. Gentleman intended a covert sneer when he asked such a question. He was tempted to use a stronger expression, but it might be un-Parliamentary; and, therefore, he would only say with regard to the insinuation that it was not courageous. It was no part of the policy of Her Majesty's Government to involve this country in foreign difficulties for the sake of any Prince. It would be a blot upon the history of Her Majesty's glorious reign if they were ever to involve this country in difficulties where neither her interests nor her obligations were concerned. In the whole history of the affair it was only the question of our national interests and our international obligations that ever entered the mind of Her Majesty's Government. He might leave the matter there. He declared that those attacks made upon Her Majesty's Government were absolutely unfounded. It might have been that in their desire to do their duty Her Majesty's Government had not met with the support which they thought they might have claimed in the circumstances. But the public opinion of Europe and the moral sense of right had been gradually developed in an unmistakable manner. The independence of the Bulgarians had been respected. They had maintained good government in their country in a manner truly surprising considering the difficulties they had to encounter, in a manner which justified Europe for the Constitution it had given them, and justified Her Majesty's Government for their efforts

in maintaining the independence and the Constitutional rights of Bulgaria.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) had done his best, and done it very well, to put a good face upon the policy pursued by Her Majesty's Government. He could not, however, say that he felt that the right hon. Gentleman had either answered the questions which the House was entitled to ask, or wholly re-assured their minds on the points raised. There was, nevertheless, much in which he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman as to the conduct of the Bulgarian people—the admirable capacity they had shown for self-government, and the general temperance, moderation, and calmness they had observed under very trying circumstances. He agreed also with the right hon. Gentleman in what he had said of the personal merits of Prince Alexander. That Prince was called to the Principality of Bulgaria at a very early age, and had shown in the course of his career an increasing capacity for dealing with the difficulties of the position in which he was placed. He had displayed not only courage and firmness, but a tact and judgment which would have raised him to a high place, had he remained in Bulgaria, among the Rulers of Europe. His behaviour not only in the war with Serbia, but in the last crisis, when he was kidnapped and carried off, had excited sympathy not only in this country, but in almost every country in Europe. But he thought there was better evidence of the faith of the Bulgarian people in Prince Alexander than that to which the right hon. Gentleman appealed. The right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten that he was not addressing an election meeting at Burnley when he referred to the opinion of the people of this country at the last General Election as a solemn and final decision of a great issue. The popular majority at that election was but a small one; the confidence of Bulgaria in Prince Alexander was manifested by a far more emphatic and unanimous declaration. As he had before observed, he agreed with much that the right hon. Gentleman had said with regard to the personal merits of Prince Alexander, and did not blame the Government for thinking that the continuance of Prince

Alexander's authority in Bulgaria offered the best means of securing the welfare of that country. It was fairly open to them to advise him, when he was at Lemberg, to return to his Principality. But what he complained of was that some time after his return, when Her Majesty's Government might have seen that the restoration of Prince Alexander was not likely to produce peace in Bulgaria, or to bring about a happy state of relations between that country and Russia, they not only urged the Prince to remain, but they addressed two despatches to Vienna and Berlin, with the view of sounding the Governments of Austria and Germany as to the view they would take of such a proposal. Her Majesty's Government ought to have known beforehand—and, indeed, must pretty well have known—that overtures of that sort would not be well received. They invited a snub, and they received a snub. Her Majesty's Government, however, continued, after this marked disapproval by Germany and Austria, to insist on Prince Alexander remaining in Bulgaria in face of his own unwillingness to do so, and in face of his telegram to the Czar, and of the Czar's hostile reply. In those respects he thought that Her Majesty's Government had gone beyond the path which dignity and prudence marked out for them. By the action they had taken Her Majesty's Government had given the Prince the worst advice for himself, and had exposed this country to very serious risk. A country that gave advice like that, which was not a mere tender of friendly counsel, but a strong pressure, implied liability on the Government which gave it; and he believed Her Majesty's Government incurred liability of a nature which would have proved very dangerous had not the good sense and foresight of the Prince himself made him refuse to follow it. Now, what was the nature of the interest which England had in Bulgaria? The right hon. Gentleman himself had admitted that it was not a direct one. It was not one which justified any active intervention. It was a very slender and remote interest, and it scarcely went beyond that philanthropic interest which England had in the freedom and the peace of a people whose conduct they respected and whose welfare they desired. The Government ought to have felt that the

interests of our own people, the lives of our soldiers, and the revenues of this country should not be risked, any more than the bones of Prince Bismarck's Pomeranian Grenadier, for the sake of interests so remote and so distant as those which we had on the Lower Danube. In truth, the policy in reference to Bulgaria had, during the momentous month of September last, answered to Lord Derby's old phrase of "meddle and muddle." It was a policy which had made no progress and which had borne no fruit, and which had exposed this country to a continuous succession of slights and of disappointments. He was, however, inclined to complain still more of the speech at the Guildhall of the noble Marquess the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury). That speech had put England into an unworthy and humiliating position when it expressed the wish that we should follow Austria, and should be guided by her views and wishes in the Bulgarian Question. In the noble Marquess's view England was to attach herself to Austria as a small boat is attached to the stern of a yacht and towed behind wherever the larger vessel goes. The policy of England ought not to be determined by that of any one other Power of Europe, and least of all by the policy of a Power placed in so difficult and critical a position as Austria undeniably was. He (Mr. Bryce) objected to the speech of the noble Marquess because it was derogatory to the dignity of England. He was sorry to think that the Ministry of a Party which professed to value the dignity of England, and which claimed to be the exponent of a spirited foreign policy, should have placed this country in such a humiliating position. But he had another objection to the speech of the noble Marquess. It was a provocative speech. While it subordinated England's action to that of Austria, it also said to Austria—"Go on wherever you like, and we will help you." It was a speech which thrust Austria forward, and endeavoured to press and urge her nearer the dangers which she was anxious to avoid, and thus it placed England in a position of danger by stimulating Austria to a more active and menacing policy, and by promising that this country would support her in whatever action she might take. A foreign newspaper had well said at the

time that Lord Salisbury was barking in order that Austria might bite. What had been the results? There was another Power which had as much interest in this matter as any other Power in Europe, and a greater influence over its determination than any Power except Russia. He would be glad to know that Her Majesty's Government had been equally anxious to keep in touch with that Power as they were to keep in touch with Austria. That Power was Germany. He would have thought that Her Majesty's Government would have seen the advantage of keeping in accord with Germany. It was the great merit of the deliverances of German statesmen in her foreign policy that they were not afraid to speak their mind plainly. The German Chancellor had furnished the most conspicuous example in recent times of a policy of distinct enunciation of principles, and he was inclined to believe that much of his success was due to his perfect frankness and candour. He did not know why we should not be just as plain-spoken, and state what we thought about the interests of our country as Germany was plain in stating her interests. We had no interest in going into an armed struggle with Austria for our only ally, and Her Majesty's Government knew perfectly well that the people of this country would not sanction their doing it. But what had been the result of the incitements used to Austria by Lord Salisbury? It was clear that they had obliged Count Kalnoky to use language, in addressing the Delegations of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which went beyond the point to which he would otherwise have gone. Then Russia took offence, and Germany felt the dangers of the situation. Prince Bismarck could not afford to allow Austria to embroil herself in a quarrel with Russia, because there were perils on another frontier of Germany which in that event would show themselves. Therefore, it was probable that many of those alarms to the peace of Europe, which had caused such deep concern to every Member of the House, were due to the unfortunate impulse which prompted the unwise utterance of the noble Marquess. The interpretation which was placed on the Guildhall speech of the noble Marquess was clear from an article which appeared in *The Times* the next morning, which stated

that if Austria was compelled to come to conflict with Russia with respect to Bulgaria she would not be left without the support of England. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) accused the Government with wanting to stir up war with Russia; but he entirely acquitted the Government of any such intention. He fully believed that they desired, according to their lights—which might sometimes be very faint lights—to preserve peace; but that they had been following, so far as Russia was concerned, a policy of brag. They had been under the impression that there was a necessary and deep-rooted hostility between this country and Russia by seeking to alarm and worry Russia—an impression entirely unfounded—and they had acted accordingly. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that Her Majesty's Government endeavoured to induce the Powers to fulfil their Treaty obligations by promises of moral support. He did not know what the right hon. Gentleman meant by moral support, nor how far he meant to convey that these Treaty obligations were obligations which England was bound to enforce, even though those who were equally parties to them declined to act. The right hon. Gentleman said that Her Majesty's Government were anxious to give moral support and all that that implied. In the last resort, support to those who relied on the promises of a great Power took the form of battalions of men. Her Majesty's Government had sought to push first Prince Alexander and then Austria on by their moral support to a position in which they might have demanded the physical support of this country, and then it would have turned out that this country was unwilling to give them any such armed aid. In carrying out the concert of Europe it was highly desirable that the Ministers of this country should use no language implying that they would give more than they knew the people of this country would sanction. With regard to the actual state of affairs, he (Mr. Bryce) felt a great difficulty in saying anything, because they had no information on the subject—no despatches coming near to the present time. He would quite admit that his right hon. Friend might have strong reasons for

Mr. Bryce

not giving the House the despatches up to date, nor would he press for them; but, at the same time, they ought to have something more distinct, something more explicit from the Government than they had received with regard to their present attitude and future policy. The House ought to know whether the policy of the Government was still that of the Guildhall speech, and whether it was a policy of relying upon Austria and Austria alone. The House ought to know, in other words, whether it was a policy of humbly following Austria and, at the same time, speaking so as to provoke a conflict between her and Russia, or whether it was a policy strictly limited to the maintenance of such obligations and interests as the other signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin were prepared to maintain against any Power attempting to violate them, and conducted with full consciousness of the fact that the interests of England were not such as to warrant armed intervention in these East European disputes.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Sir, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Bryce), and who but a few months ago held the responsible position of Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is very well aware that, in speaking of foreign affairs, a Minister undertakes a responsibility which extends beyond the country with which he is identified. The hon. Gentleman, in the course of his speech, has made certain appeals to Her Majesty's Government. He wants to know whether it is our intention to lead on Austria—to push Austria into the discharge of duties which he implies Austria is unwilling herself to discharge, in order to bring about a disturbance of the peace of Europe. Sir, nothing can be more baseless than the suggestion that that is any portion of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government have never, in any utterance which they have made, in any letter or despatch which they have written, in any suggestion, laid themselves open to the charge which the hon. Member suggests. The hon. Gentleman referred to the speech of the noble Marquess the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury) at the Guildhall. What does the noble Marquess say? He says—

"This country has an interest, but it is not an isolated interest. It is a corporate interest in connection with the Powers of Europe who have signed that Treaty. There rests upon us no isolated duty to vindicate that Treaty if it should be broken. If the Powers of Europe, or any considerable portion of the Powers of Europe, recognize the duty to vindicate the Treaty under any contingencies that may arise, I am sure the English people will not be backward to recognize their duty."

Does that imply that Austria alone is to be pushed backward by the little boat that is being towed at her stern to undertake the liabilities which Austria herself is not willing to discharge? The hon. Gentleman suggested that Austria was the big boat on the river, and was being pushed forward by the little boat towed to her stern. We are supposed to push on Austria to undertake liabilities which she herself is not willing to discharge. There was one other reference to Austria in this speech, and it was simply to this effect—that undoubtedly Austria had a very great interest, and a much stronger interest than this country has, in the events which were progressing in Bulgaria. Undoubtedly she had a much stronger interest; and, therefore, an opinion and expression of feeling on the part of Austria would weigh considerably with Her Majesty's Government. The hon. Gentleman has been good enough to express great sympathy and interest with the Bulgarian nationality. What is really the charge against Her Majesty's Government? We were right up to a certain point; we were right, so far as I can gather from the hon. Gentleman, up to the period of the intention being expressed by Prince Alexander to abdicate, and that we were wrong to use our influence to persuade him if we could—a moral influence only—never in any one instance backed by the promise of any material support—a moral influence to induce him to remain in the position to which he had been called by the voice of the people of Bulgaria, a position which had been ratified by the concurrence of the Powers of Europe under Treaty, and in which he was approved and supported by the Porte, the Suzerain Power. What is the charge against Lord Iddesleigh and Her Majesty's Government? It is that they persisted in insisting that it was the duty of the Prince, and to the advantage of the people of Bulgaria, that he should remain. We were told that

we did wrong because the other Powers would, not, or did not, sustain the opinion and concur in the view which Her Majesty's Government expressed. But it is alleged against us that we have submitted England to a rebuff and to a humiliation, because we did not go about in the first instance to ascertain what the other Powers of Europe would say on a matter of this kind, and because we had the temerity to express an opinion without having first of all gone to them and asked whether it was an opinion which they would sustain and support. It is a rebuff because we have given an opinion which we believe was a sound one, and which we believed would be to the advantage of that country itself and was consistent with the public honour and with the interests of Europe. I should like to ask whether the results have not justified the opinion which we expressed? Have not the withdrawal of Prince Alexander and the circumstances which accompanied it brought about a condition of affairs which certainly is not one that tends to the advantage of Europe or the security of the peace of Europe—a condition of affairs which might have been averted—I do not say it would have been averted—if Prince Alexander had seen his way clear to remain in Bulgaria? Another remark has been made by the hon. Gentleman to which I must take exception. He said that we have no interest in Bulgaria. He said that our interests there were slender and remote, and purely philanthropic. But that is not the language that was used some years ago when the Prince of Bulgaria was a rebel against the Turks. I say that this country, when it has put its signature to a solemn Treaty, has an interest which it may not be its duty to maintain by force of arms; but it has an interest in seeing that these Treaty obligations are observed, and in maintaining the public faith of Europe. I say that it is our duty to concern ourselves with any affair to which we are bound by Treaty, and in which the public faith of this country is concerned. More than that we have not said, and further than that we have not gone. Well, the hon. Gentleman has suggested that there is not the complete and perfect understanding that he could desire to see existing between this country and Germany. I assure him that his view

is entirely incorrect, and that I can satisfy him, at all events, on that point. But I must say one word. I had hoped that hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House who were in an official and responsible position would have recognized at least this one thing—that it is the duty of Governments to endeavour to preserve continuity in our foreign relations, to endeavour to present as a people a united face to Europe in moderation, in judgment, and in good faith. That is the object Her Majesty's Government have now in view. We have not reversed any one of the steps which were taken by our Predecessors in the Foreign Office—not a single one. We had no reason to do so. We have followed precisely in the lines that were laid down, and with which general approval has been expressed in the country at large. But I wish to say to the House, and to the country, that language held lightly about foreign affairs in the East of Europe at this moment is language which is not to be commended, and is not in the least patriotic. We feel that the responsibility of affairs at this moment is great. We are clear—we are open—in the language we hold as to the policy which we advocate, and which we pursue. There is no difference of any kind whatever. We are aiming at preserving the peace of Europe. We aim at discharging the duties, preserving the interests, and fulfilling the obligations of this country; and if we are asked to particularize we tell you what we said on the first night of the Session with reference particularly to Bulgaria. The instructions which have been given to the Diplomatic Representatives of Her Majesty are, first of all, that they shall have regard to the Treaty obligations of this country; next that their aim shall be to maintain and preserve the liberties of the people which those Treaty obligations were intended to conserve; and, last of all—I do not wish to put it in invidious terms—that the susceptibilities and interests of Russia shall be observed with all due regard to these two preceding conditions. These are the views with which we still maintain any negotiations and any transactions which we may have with reference to that part of the world. We have nothing whatever to be ashamed of in the course we have pursued. We are perfectly prepared to give a good account of the

course we have taken in our dealings with Foreign Powers; but we have regard to the interests which are imposed upon us by negotiations with other Powers; and to their susceptibilities and our relations and obligations to them, and we cannot at the present moment give any further information of that kind to the House.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Sir, if this debate has no other effect than that of having elicited the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), it is entirely justified. I agree with everything the right hon. Gentleman has said as to the responsibility of using lightly language with reference to foreign affairs in critical circumstances. It is because I believe that the rash and mischievous language of the noble Marquess the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury) has been the cause of all the disturbance—the main cause of all the disturbance which has since occurred—that I agree with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith). It was, therefore, desirable to elicit that which I regard not as an explicit, but a substantial, disavowal of the policy of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury). If the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury—who is a man of peace, and uses very sensible language in regard to foreign affairs—had been selected instead of the noble Marquess to speak at the Guildhall on November 9, Europe would be in a far more peaceful condition. He is not a man of brag, and does not think it necessary to pose before the world as a great master of spirited foreign policy, who afterwards runs away from his valiant declarations. What we complain of in the Guildhall speech is what we believe was the substance of it. The noble Marquess referred to the circumstances under which this country would go to war, and said we only went to war when we had Allies; and he pointed his meaning by referring to the Russian advance on Adrianople in 1829, to the Crimean War, and to the action of the late Earl of Beaconsfield's Government in 1878. He then said it was not an isolated question for us; and, having shown that the question of peace or war for us depended on whether or not we had Allies, where did he indicate we should find Allies? Speaking of the peace of Europe, and the Treaty of Berlin, he made not one single

allusion to Germany. Who is the Power who is interested in this matter, and who is to take the lead? I do not think the right hon. Gentleman's criticisms upon my hon. Friend's (Mr. Bryce) illustration of the point was justified. If you say to a man, "You go on, and I will follow," it is very likely you may induce him to go on; and that is precisely the course taken on this occasion. What are the words—"In this matter Austria is on the look out." Well, I suppose we were on the look out too, and so were Germany and Russia and everybody else—

"But the opinion and judgment of Austria must weigh with enormous weight in the Councils of Her Majesty's Government, and the policy which Austria pursues will contribute very largely to shape the policy of England."

What does that mean? It means that if Austria came to issue with Russia, England's policy would be shaped by that of Austria. I say that is both a humiliating and a dangerous policy. Supposing the Prince of Bulgaria, acting on your advice, had remained where he was, would not England have been in a dangerous position? Supposing Austria had come to issue with Russia, we should have been in the position of having induced Austria to put herself in a position of great peril. If you had attempted to give effect to the Guildhall speech, you would not have remained the Government of England 24 hours. Prince Bismarck knew that if he were to take the part of Austria it would bring him into conflict with Russia and France. He was determined that no such calamity should occur. He said to Austria—"I will not have this; I will not have you pushed on by the Guildhall speech, and this Anglo-Austrian Alliance shall not be a peril to Europe."

MR. W. H. SMITH: Quote his words.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is exactly what I want to do, to quote, and that is why I have asked for the correspondence with Austria, Russia, and Germany, which followed the Guildhall speech. I want to know what has followed upon this offer of England to shape her policy according to the policy of Austria? It is that which has more disturbed Europe than anything that has happened. It was a most invidious statement. It was invidious towards all the other Powers who were Parties to the Treaty of Berlin, and nothing

could be more dangerous or inconsistent. The statements of the First Lord of the Treasury and of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), however, happily show that the Government have retired altogether from the speech of the noble Marquess at the Guildhall. The very object of this debate is to make it plain that they have so retired. That speech was an absolute contradiction of everything that has been said in this debate by the Government to-night. I sincerely hope that the policy of the Guildhall speech is abandoned. It is a most dangerous and mischievous policy, and during the last three months it has done infinite harm in Europe, and I hope that the House will now have an assurance that it is totally and finally abandoned. It has been for years the weakness of the policy of the noble Marquess that he has always been hankering after an exclusively Anglo-Austrian alliance. It is what he calls "Glad tidings of great joy."

MR. W. H. SMITH: A German and an Austrian alliance.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: If the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) meant a German-Austrian Alliance, I hope that the next time he goes to the Guildhall he will remember to put the word "Germany" into his speech.

MR. W. H. SMITH: These were the very words he used. He spoke of an alliance between Germany and Austria as being "Glad tidings of great joy."

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I am speaking of the Guildhall speech in November of last year, and the marked omission of any reference to Germany was most mischievous and injurious. There was nothing more mischievous than the omission of any notice of the interests of Germany. I have nothing whatever to say against the principles of the policy now stated by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury. If he would withdraw all that language about the possibility of war depending upon the Alliance they might succeed in securing; if he would say that England would act, not according to the views of Austria specially, but in the views of all the Powers of Europe generally—including Russia—for I am speaking without any of that unworthy jealousy of Russia

which has done so much mischief to this country—and, acting in the interests of the liberties of all the Powers of Europe, more especially of the weak and the struggling Powers; if that be the policy of Her Majesty's Government, I think we may even condone the humiliations of this Blue Book, which exhibits England going hat in hand round Europe, and having her proposals rejected by every Power. The sagacious proposals of our Foreign Office have been rejected by every *Chancellerie* in Europe. This was not pleasant, but it was wholesome, and I hope that in future the Government will not go about exposing themselves at every Court in Europe. Her Majesty's Government sent three or four Circulars to all the Powers of Europe, and all of them were sent back endorsed "Declined with thanks." That is the Blue Book which is laid upon the Table by this "spirited foreign policy Government." I hope that the Government will return to a more sober state of mind, and that they will pursue the great interests of peace by methods which are more likely to succeed.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): Sir, the great schoolmaster has just spoken and the uneducated and ignorant lads on the Treasury Bench receive with humble submission the lesson and advice which has been so kindly tendered to them. But whether the speech which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has delivered is likely to be productive of good and beneficial results in Europe remains to be seen. Perhaps it may be that at all the Foreign Courts of Europe a more correct estimate is formed of the right hon. Gentleman and of his influence in this country than is formed by his Friends in this House. I think that the exhibition we have witnessed to-night will prevent the unpatriotic sentiments to which we have been listening from being productive of any ill result in any capital of Europe. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has delivered an oration which consisted mainly of very long extracts from the Blue Books, with comments and glosses of his own. I rather wondered what is the motive which induced him to stay our proceedings in order to make that oration. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the

Sir William Harcourt

Member for Derby explains the mystery. No doubt it was to enable the right hon. Gentleman to discharge himself of that venom against the noble Marquess the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury) which has so long possessed his soul. Why, Sir, there was many a more convenient opportunity, even during this present Session, for the right hon. Gentleman to make his charge and his complaints against the noble Marquess. May I ask him, for instance, why he did not deliver that speech on the 27th of January, when the right hon. Gentleman who occupies the most important and powerful position on the other side of the House—the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—touched on the Bulgarian question and the deposition—as it has been called—but which we call the kidnapping of Prince Alexander?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I had not got the Papers.

LORD JOHN MANNERS: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. Has he been confining his observations to the Blue Book? If he thinks he did, I shall quote the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who spoke on the 27th of January without the Blue Book. This is what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said upon that occasion and upon that question—

“On the question of foreign policy I am bound to say that, as far as I know, the Prime Minister, and now the Foreign Secretary, and the late Lord Idlesleigh, as Foreign Secretary, have taken just views of the position of the recently emancipated races in the Balkan Peninsula, and of the reciprocal obligations between them and the Porte. Yet there was a speech delivered by Lord Salisbury, at the Guildhall, which raised in many minds some apprehension, and appeared to lay a foundation for the question whether it was true that we, in our negotiations upon the politics of the Balkan Peninsula, had indicated to one particular Foreign Power that if she were disposed to take a particular course, and that course led to a conflict with any Power, we should be prepared to range ourselves on her side. I shall not enter into any discussion of that matter. I make no assertion beyond the fact that such was the idea conveyed to many minds, and I simply express the hope that upon that subject we shall receive assurances from Her Majesty's Government in the course of this debate which will entirely remove any such impression.”—[3 *Hansard*, (310) 96.]

Then, in the course of that debate, these assurances were given; and from that day to the present moment the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has never

expressed, in the slightest degree, any condemnation of the policy which Her Majesty's Government have pursued in that matter. But the right hon. Gentleman has been searching not only Blue Books, but also the speech of the noble Marquess at the Guildhall. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) put his gloss upon every extract from the Blue Book; and the right hon. Gentleman, following his example, has put his gloss upon the noble Marquess's speech. My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has stated that from that speech the Government never have receded, and have no intention of receding. To that speech we adhere, and yet the right hon. Gentleman was pleased magnanimously to grant us his condonation on the supposition that we repudiated the noble Marquess's speech, and were going to reverse the Eastern policy of that speech. I ask him to take back his condonation, and give us back his condemnation. Then the right hon. Gentleman pointed to the omission from the noble Marquess's speech of Germany. I suppose that if the word Germany had been introduced into the speech, then the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, would have had no complaint to make. Why, one of the most notorious facts in modern politics is that Germany and Austria are allied in the closest and most intimate manner; and when we talk of Austrian policy, all the world knows that German policy and Austrian policy mean, practically, one and the same thing. Something has been said about Prince Bismarck's speech, which the right hon. Gentleman was challenged to quote. What was the speech to which the right hon. Gentleman was referring? He said, “How could I quote, because I had not the Blue Book?”

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is not what I was asked. I was asked about the negotiations which took place. I did not understand that I was asked to quote Prince Bismarck's speech.

LORD JOHN MANNERS: I quite understand now that there has been a misunderstanding. But what I want to remark upon is the right hon. Gentleman's comments on Prince Bismarck's speech, and upon the speech which Count Kalnoky delivered at the Delegation. The right hon. Gentleman, not content to put his gloss upon the Guild-

hall speech of the noble Marquess, proceeded further to put an interpretation, first on Count Kalnoky, and, secondly, on Prince Bismarck, and attributed both these speeches to the speech made by the noble Marquess at the Guildhall. Now, observe how the right hon. Gentleman not only penetrates the secrets of the Ministers of his own Sovereign, but penetrates the secrets of the German Chancellor, and quite penetrates the secrets of the Austrian Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman holds that the speech of Count Kalnoky would have been in a very different strain, and would have tended to the preservation of European peace, if it had not been for the unfortunate speech of the noble Marquess at the Guildhall. Then the right hon. Gentleman, having informed us of this, brings Prince Bismarck into the field, and states that Prince Bismarck felt obliged to come to the rescue of his unfortunate Colleague, and to take every precaution that the noble Marquess's speech should not drive Austria and Germany into a war with Russia. The people of this country, and the people of Germany and of Austria, will be of opinion that the right hon. Gentleman knows as much and no more of the secret reasons which actuate the speeches of the statesmen of Austria and Germany as he does of those of his own country. I have confined myself to a few comments on the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I feel that the situation at present is still very grave; and when we talk of the policy to be pursued in Eastern or Western Europe, we are bound to speak with the greatest reserve and prudence. After that admirable exposition of the policy of England given by my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, I shall say no more; but I entreat this House and this country to judge between my right hon. Friend and the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

Question put, and *negatived*.

SOUTH AFRICA—AFFAIRS OF ZULULAND.—OBSERVATIONS.

DR. CLARK (Caithness), who had an Amendment on the Paper in the following terms:—

"And humbly to represent to Your Majesty the desirability of reconsidering the proposed arrangement in Zululand with a view of pre-

venting an important section of the Zulu people being separated from their own nation," said: Since the House met last Session a new policy has been determined upon by Her Majesty's Government in regard to South Africa.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

DR. CLARK: I was about to say that the new policy of Her Majesty's Government has caused considerable discussion in South Africa, and I believe that one result of that policy is that the Natal Executive Council has strongly opposed the settlement proposed by the Government, and has even gone so far as to petition Her Majesty to remove the Governor who made it. We have been presented with a Blue Book on South African affairs; but the last despatch contained in that Blue Book is dated July in last year, so that this House has had no means of arriving at a conclusion as to the wisdom of the policy carried out in South Africa, especially with regard to the Zulus. Now, Sir, the Zulus are a brave and chivalrous race that I have taken an interest in for many years; they are the finest of the Basutu races; but our policy towards them has been a sad one, and many crimes have been committed against them by both the Liberal and Conservative Governments. The Conservative Government is to blame, or rather is responsible, for the initial crime—for the unwarrantable invasion of Zululand, and the unnecessary and unjustifiable Zulu War of 1879. I say they were responsible, although it is well known they were not in favour of the war. It was forced on by one man—Sir Bartle Frere. I do not desire to make this a Party question, or I would require to denounce, or deplore, the want of moral courage which the Liberal Government afterwards displayed—their cowardly indecision; their mean attempt to evade the responsibility that had been incurred; and their miserable half-hearted settlement of sending Cetewayo back with his hands tied—a condition of things that necessarily meant failure. I have no desire to blame either Party; but I think I ought to say this—that for every Zulu killed in the war of 1879 there have been 10 killed since by war and famine, because we have refused to interfere. It is

well known that after the war of 1879 we divided Zululand into 16 Kingdoms, about one-fourth of the entire country being set aside as a Reserve. For several years civil war and anarchy prevailed. When the late Liberal Government attempted a settlement by sending Cetewayo back they sent him back so trammelled by conditions that it was utterly impossible for him to govern the land. He was soon driven out; he became a wanderer, and died either of a broken heart, or committed suicide in the bush. The Zulus were compelled to enter into negotiations with the Boers on the Border. These negotiations were entered into by Cetewayo's Prime Minister and son. They offered terms to the Dutch Boers for their assistance in putting down the rebels who had driven them out of their territory. The Boers gladly went to their aid, but before they could arrive Cetewayo was dead. Terms were soon arrived at between Cetewayo's son and brother and a number of their Dutch defenders, who were able to drive the invaders out of Zululand, and who entered into a Treaty by which they received a large portion of Zululand for the services they had rendered. Now, the Zulus and similar races have no idea of magnitude and value; and it is certain that, although a large territory was ceded, the Zulus did not fully understand what they were doing. I may mention an instance that occurred on one occasion to myself. I obtained some milk from a Native, and I offered him half-a-dozen matches or a shilling. He chose the matches in preference to the shilling. There has now been a new Republic established in Zululand, and the original settlers have sold their farms. Now, I think that the policy of allowing the White man to interfere in Native quarrels in South Africa is a very bad one; and I hope the Colonial Government, no matter which side of the House may be in power, will determine on some fixed policy for the future, by which they will be able to prevent the condition of things that has been experienced in Zululand arising elsewhere. The only way, I believe, in which this can be done is by refusing to recognize any grants made by the Native Chiefs or Kings to White adventurers. I do not intend to dispute the conditions laid down by the late Secretary for the Colonies. On the whole, they were probably as satisfactory as

could be arranged; but I maintain that the present settlement does not carry out all the conditions laid down by the right hon. Gentleman who is now Secretary for War (Mr. E. Stanhope). We have allowed a large number of White men to settle in Zululand, and it is necessary, doubtless, to recognize the present position of things as accomplished facts. Had the Government merely made an arrangement recognizing those facts, and providing that the land given to the White people should be held by them, the rest of the country being retained by the Zulu people, I should not have brought the subject before the House. But my objection is this—that land that was never asked for by the Boers; land where the Boers had never been; land which has always been in the possession of the Natives, has been enclosed within the new Republic; and that a portion of the territory, on which farms have been established and which the farmers are to keep, has been placed in what is now to be called Eastern Zululand. If any class of men have a right to be considered it is the Zulus, and especially the brother of Cetewayo, who, during the Zulu War, assisted us and fought on our side. Yet now we are assisting to drive him and his people away from Zululand, or to leave him at the mercy of this new Republic. The Boers, so far as the North-East of Zululand is concerned, are not there; and consequently the result of the new Treaty is to separate the Zulu people into two districts—one being Eastern Zululand and the other the new Republic. As a matter of fact, Zululand has been divided, as this House is divided with a central portion between the two ranges of Benches. Upon one portion there are about 80 farmers, and by the new Treaty the Dutch farmers are to remain there, so that, as a matter of fact, we have in Eastern Zululand some 80 farms and 400 people with which it is proposed to begin as a new State for the coloured population. I want to know from the Government on what ground they are taking away land of this kind and placing White men upon it, and why this portion of Zululand, which the Boers never asked for, has been given to them? It is stated that necessity of securing a trade route is the reason of the new arrangement. But what is the value of a trade with 50,000 or 60,000 Zulus who are not in the habit of wear-

ing clothes? Zululand is bounded by the Transvaal and the Portuguese Dominions, and there is no trade with the interior except through the one or the other, so that the trade with Zululand is of so little value that it cannot be worth considering. And, moreover, under the existing Convention we have every condition necessary for carrying on trade with the different territories freely and safely. We have a right to open up roads throughout the entire territory, and we have a right to have our waggons and goods carried through without any transit duties. The Republic has adopted the principle of Free Trade; the roads are to be kept open, and no Customs duty is charged upon any produce passing through the country, so that everything that could be got from the standpoint of trade exists already. I do not say that we are to recede from the Treaty which has been entered into; but I ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies to consider the matter a little more before the Government finally adopt the Convention. This, after all, is only a preliminary Treaty, and it may be possible to get back for the Zulus a portion of the land of which they have been deprived. I do not see how the matter can be affected by any question of trade. It may be possible to give to the White farmers all the land they have occupied, and allow the Natives to keep the land they have at present. This would enable the Zulus to continue possession of land that is much more valuable to them than land nearer the coast. It may be said that it is not wise to bring the Boers nearer the coast; but it only amounts to a question of about 10 miles either one way or the other. Then there is the condition of Swaziland. Swaziland is intimately connected with Zululand. The Swazies are Zulus, and in whatever way you solve the Zululand question you must solve the Swaziland question. Swaziland is now in a condition of anarchy. There is a very curious condition of things established there. You have a King who has granted concessions for money and liquor to Englishmen and Dutchmen. A roaring trade in liquor appears to be carried on there. There is no licence or duty required to be paid; there is no tax of any kind, and ardent spirits are introduced and sold by the Natives at *£d.* a bottle; so that drunkenness has become very common.

The King has already made large concessions of mineral rights to Englishmen, and of grazing rights to the Dutch farmers. I understand that about one-half or two-thirds of Swaziland has been given away to English and Dutch adventurers. I am told that a somewhat favourite method of dealing with the Natives is to put down the figure nine, and then to add another nine after it, making 99. I hope to hear from the Government whether they have any definite policy with respect to Swaziland and to the general question of South Africa, and on what lines they intend to go until the new conditions have been developed? The right hon. Gentleman is very well aware that we have now got gold fields in the Reserve. There are gold fields also in Swaziland and in North Bechuanaland. The question to be considered is whether you intend to have a state of anarchy before you take steps to produce order, or whether you will take time by the forelock and arrange as to the conditions on which the Natives and Whites may live and develop South Africa? The condition of things in the Reserve at the present time is not very creditable to us. Some time ago a vagabond Boer shot Dabulamanzi — Cetewayo's brother, in the Reserve. Now, there is no law in the Reserve, and therefore the murderer cannot be tried in the Native Reserve, nor can he be tried outside the Reserve for anything that occurred within it, nor by the new Republic, and the result is that this gentleman is to this day walking about with a number of other murderers in Swaziland, and he cannot be touched. Something certainly must be done to put an end to the anarchy which now exists. I also strongly urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the necessity of not only considering this question, but also the condition of other Native territories in South Africa. You have the Zulu Question, the Basuto Question, the Pondo Question, and the Northern Bechuanaland Question. All of them require settling, and, speaking from the reports and telegrams received from South Africa, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the telegrams which have appeared in *The Times* as to the treatment of the Zulus by Mr. Osborn can possibly give a true representation of the actual state of affairs? I cannot believe the statements which have been

made, because I know that two-thirds of the news sent here is altogether untrue, and I am satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman would soon send Mr. Osborn about his business if he had done anything to justify the charges which have been made against him. I think it is high time for the Government to cease their present policy of doing things by halves in South Africa, and to resolve upon some definite course of action. They ought, as soon as possible, to come to some conclusion and determination upon their general policy which would prevent the Native tribes from falling into a state of anarchy. If a state of anarchy arises you will have expeditions such as that which you have had to Bechuana-land, costing you £1,000,000 or so, and involving an extra expenditure of £100,000 or so a-year. Perhaps the wisest course would be to send out a Commission to South Africa. I see in his place the hon. Baronet who represents the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler), who has long been a friend of the Aborigines, and who knows something about South Africa, and also my hon. Friend the Member for one of the Divisions of Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie), who also knows something about South Africa. Why not send out some gentleman of that kind to ask the Cape and Natal, and also the Boer Republic, to come to some general arrangement which might settle the question? At present you have Natal and the Cape Colony fighting each other by tariffs, and trying to steal the interior trade from each other. If Commissioners went out and obtained accurate information, instead of depending on Reports which are generally the reverse of truth, and doing in the future what we have done in the past, it would be possible to devise and adopt a more prudent policy than it is now. At the present moment, with the best possible intentions, we are simply destroying the nations we profess to serve. I do not intend to press the Resolution I have placed upon the Paper to a Division, but I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies to see that the policy of this country should not be allowed to press hardly, as I think it does, upon the Native tribes, and that we should not sacrifice the Natives for the benefit of the people of Natal or anybody else. We may, at least, secure to the Zulus the land which is now occupied by them,

and upon which there are no White people.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I am glad that the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has had an opportunity of bringing this important question before the House, and I listened with great interest to the speech which he made. Both he and I, in and out of this House, have considerable differences of opinion; but it was with much pleasure that I listened to his remarks on this occasion, because there was much in them with which I fully agree. As the hon. Member said, the history of our connection with Zululand is a very unfortunate history, and by one step after another we have reduced that country to a very sad state. The Zulus were a powerful people. We once thought them too powerful; but we have now brought them down to very great poverty. It appears from the Blue Book just delivered to hon. Members, in regard to the affairs of Zululand, that Sir Henry Bulwer was opposed to the policy which has resulted in the destruction of the Zulus. I should have liked, in speaking of this matter, to have done so in the presence of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan), who represented the Colonies in the last Parliament; but, unfortunately, he is not in his place. Lord Kimberley has been blamed for the course he took in regard to the restoration of Cetewayo, and it was strongly opposed by Sir Henry Bulwer. Certainly, it was not likely to be a successful policy when the persons who were to carry it out were strongly opposed to each other. In an interesting and able document at the commencement of the Blue Book we have the views of Sir Henry Bulwer, and I think that Memorandum fully justifies the remarks I have ventured to make in former debates. I know it may be said that it turned out that the restoration of King Cetewayo was an error; but I lay no blame upon Lord Kimberley for that. I myself headed a deputation to the noble Lord, the object of which was to recommend him to take that course which afterwards turned out to be a mistake. At the same time, the evil results of the restoration were in part due to causes that might have been avoided. One of the causes of that mistake is, I think, clearly shown in the Book now before us. There is another

despatch contained in it, at page 36, from Lord Granville to Sir Arthur Havelock, which I look upon as a most admirable despatch. There are other Members in this House besides myself who take a large interest in South Africa, and who are anxious to hear the views of my right hon. Friend who now represents the Colonies in this House. One satisfactory result of recent political changes is that the Colonies are now represented in this House by a statesman of Colonial experience and sympathies, and knowing more of Colonial matters than any of his Predecessors. We all recognize my right hon. Friend as a great authority on all Colonial questions in this House—altogether unlike the generality of Ministers, who are too frequently pitchforked into Offices for which they have no capacity. My right hon. Friend has gone to the Colonial Office with a thorough knowledge of everything concerning the Colonies; and I therefore congratulate him as well as the House and the country upon his appointment, and upon the fact that so important a position has been filled by a Minister so admirably qualified for it. I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend will give to the important questions of South Africa that attention which they eminently deserve. Our present difficulties are due to the fact that, at the close of the Zulu War, we shrank from the responsibility of taking the country, and making ourselves responsible for the government of it. Successive Governments shrank, the House shrank, and the country generally shrank, from annexing Zululand. I believe that after the Zulu War there was but one course left for us, and that was to take the country. We have incurred great responsibilities to that country, and we ought to meet them directly, and undertake the government of it. The hon. Member opposite has mentioned the circumstances of the murder of Dabulamanzi, a distinguished Zulu Chief, brother of King Cetewayo; and yet the fact that no one has been tried for that murder is a forcible instance of the anarchy which now prevails. We were unwilling to take the course of annexing the country; but, seeing the close connection which England has had with the history of Zululand, I think the best course for the Government of this country to have taken would have been

to make ourselves directly responsible for the government of Zululand. We see now that a number of English and Dutch farmers are seizing the land from the unfortunate Zulus. That is a condition from which we ought to endeavour to protect them; and the only way in which we can do that is to take over the country, and take a more direct share in the responsibilities of governing it.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I am sure that we are all agreed—at least, all of those who know anything of South Africa—that it would have been much better, after we defeated the Zulus, if we had annexed the country. We made a great mistake in breaking up the power of the Zulus, because the Zulus were never hostile to us; and if they had desired to go to war with any White people, it would certainly not have been with the English. Those days, however, have now passed, and we find ourselves in our present difficulty. My hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) told us that we have reduced the Zulu people to some 6,000 or 8,000, whereas in former times they could muster 40,000 fighting men. I believe that if we rule the Zulus fairly, and give them sufficient land, they will rapidly increase in numbers—much more rapidly than White people. In point of fact, they double their population every 25 or 30 years. All I would recommend is this. It is most desirable that we should, as far as possible, come to a common understanding with the Presidents of the Orange Free State and the South African Republics. It is to be regretted that the Boer population hold views different from those of Englishmen—that they will not admit the equality of Black men before the law, and, as a rule, are not willing to grant the same measure of justice to the Blacks that the English people are. There is no chance of dealing fairly well with them unless we can come to a common understanding with the two Republics. It is also desirable to enter into a Customs union with the Dutch Republics. I believe that if we could enter into some such arrangement it would result in a much better feeling than exists at the present day between the English and Dutch Colonists. At present the Cape Colony and Natal are cutting each other's throats. I would, therefore, implore the right hon. Gen-

tleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies to use his influence in persuading the Ministry of Cape Colony, and the Governor and Council of Natal, to enter into some Customs Union between themselves and the Dutch States. By a Customs arrangement such as now exists between the States which form the German Empire, I believe it would be possible to produce a better feeling than that which now exists between the English in Cape Colony and the Dutch in the two Republics.

SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): A short time ago I heard the late Secretary of the Colonies express his regret that it was impossible for this country to remedy the unfortunate state of affairs in Zululand. Now, I do not believe that it is too late. The right hon. Gentleman was perfectly right in saying that the Zulu War was begun by the Party who are now in power; but it was continued by the weakness and vacillation of a Liberal Government. In 1884, I headed a deputation to a Liberal Government, represented in the person of Lord Derby, and I spoke in favour of the Zulus. I told his Lordship then that in the opinion of a large number of persons connected with South Africa, who were well acquainted with the policy which had been pursued in that country, we had broken up the Zulu Government, their military system, their social order, and their nationality; that the Zulus were our friends; that they had ever been our allies; and that we had been a cruel and unjust nation in our dealings with them. I urged upon Her Majesty's Government in the most earnest terms I could employ for the sake of the Zulus, for the credit and honour of this country, for the time that was coming, and for the sake of future peace in South Africa itself, to take the Zulus immediately under the protection of Great Britain. I remember, after the battle of Ulundi, the Kaffirs coming to our soldiers with assegais in their hands, and shields on their backs, to ask who was to rule them, and what chief they must look to for guidance and protection. Never, on any occasion since the battle of Ulundi, has a Zulu touched a British subject. But, as my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has said, the gallant Zulu people have been crushed by cruelty and by famine

almost out of existence, and now we complacently rob them of their land, banish them from their homes, and relegate them to a Reserve, in which—although we claim to possess an authority—there is no law. In Natal itself, to which the Zulus fled long ago from Cetewayo's dominion, they find themselves crushed, and are largely diminishing in number, without the prospect—which they ought to have, of returning back to their native land. It is a singular thing that in March last 42 Members of this House presented a strong remonstrance to Lord Granville against the deplorable condition of things then existing in Zululand being allowed to continue. The Address presented to the noble Lord was signed by sympathizers with the Zulu people on both sides of the House, Liberals and Tories joining together in formulating the document, which concluded by expressing—

"The hope that your Lordship will be pleased to take immediate steps to place the Zulus under British protection, which, we believe, they will welcome."

It is a singular fact that only a month or two before Sir Henry Bulwer had written these words in January, 1886—

"The outlet for the Native question of Natal lies in Zululand; and I will go further, and say that the outlet for every Native question in that part of South Africa lies through Zululand and the Native territories that adjoin it to the vast African Continent beyond the region of European occupation, that way lies a golden bridge for the Native questions of the future. But let that outlet be closed, let that golden bridge be destroyed, and there will remain pent up within our limits, unable to escape, the elements of burning questions which for want of their natural outlet, must some day be kindled into flames in our very midst."

Sir Henry Bulwer, one of the most distinguished men ever sent to South Africa, persistently but fruitlessly urged upon the late Government to take the charge of this Zulu question into their own hands, and to protect one of the most gallant races that ever lived, against the inroads of the Boers who were going into their country under false pretences. In the month of March a deputation of messengers from Umyamana, Ndaduko and Dinuzulu, and the headmen of the Zulu people on the Reserve, made a statement and presented a petition to the Judge of the Native High Court, in which they made an earnest request to the Government to be taken under

British protection. What did they say—

"We ask that this son of his (Cetewayo's) may be ruled by Her Majesty, and taken under her wing as she did his father before him, that he may be raised by her and guided by her, that he may govern the land that she gave to his father. That he may be appointed under the same laws as those with which his father was returned, and by which he was guided. We ask that the Boers may be removed from, and go out of, our country; we cannot look at one another; we cannot live in peace with them. We wish to return to our own people—the British—and to live under the Queen who has always ruled over us. The heads of the Zulu people have sent us to do homage for them, and to await the reply of the Government, whether it be that we are to be left to die, or whether it be that we are to be succoured from this our great trouble that is destroying us."

That was about the hundredth petition which the Zulus have presented; it was delivered in person, and it met with no response. We talk of sympathizing with the Bulgarians, and we have heard a great deal of recrimination upon a subject which certainly does not affect the honour of this country as much as the cruel war waged against the Zulu people, our wicked neglect of them, and our indisposition to protect them against the unjust and unmanly treatment they are receiving at the hands of the Boers. The Boers have taken from them the land which was reserved for them and employed it as pasturage for themselves. An arbitration was appointed, and the decision was against the possession of this land by the Boers; but we failed to protect them against the annexation of their territory by the Boers. Moreover, we assisted in the destruction of Seccoconi. Our conduct was not only unjust but illogical, and everywhere we displayed the most cruel neglect of those we were bound to protect. I protest against our unmanly treatment of the Zulu people, and I trust that for the honour of this country something may yet be done to release us of the painful position in which we are now involved. I hope that the Queen's Government will see to it, and some better arrangement is made than now prevails, and so remove the stigma which is now cast upon us. Although Sir Henry Bulwer told us in one of his despatches the other day that we have gone past the time when the evil can be remedied—that, in fact, we are two years beyond the time when it is possible to do anything; I trust to hear from the

Secretary of State for the Colonies something that will be distinctly for the advantage of the Native tribes in South Africa, or I am afraid that before long we may witness a blaze such as we have never seen before, which may involve this country in dishonour and disgrace.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I have listened, I need hardly say, with very great interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark); for if there is one man in this House who understands the question, from personal knowledge of the country, and of the different tribes, it is the hon. Member, and therefore we naturally pay great attention to anything that falls from him. I cannot help expressing my regret that he has chosen this time to bring forward this Motion; for, although I have done my best to get the Papers before the House, we have been able only to present Papers which really do not deal with the questions which have been brought forward by the hon. Member this evening. Therefore, we are in some difficulty, because hon. Members are not acquainted with the actual state of facts; and, on the other hand, I am rather afraid of giving too many details on the subject. It is not my business, or desire to go into many of the questions touched upon to-night. Many hon. Members know that, as far as I am concerned, I opposed, and with my hon. and learned Friend the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst), voted against the Conservative Government of the day upon the Zulu War. I have always been of opinion that that war was a most unjust war, and I hold that opinion now strengthened as it is by the results. Nor is it my business to contend against the policy of the late Liberal Government, which I consistently and most persistently attacked, almost to weariness, in this House. I disagreed with the return of Cetewayo to Zululand; for I believed he would not return in a position to hold his own against the intrigues which were certain to spring up against him or against the bad counsel of his family. That opinion also proved to be correct. I pass on to the beginning of 1886, when the Memorandum was written by Sir Henry Bulwer, to whose merits only a just tribute has been paid. Now, the position of affairs is very clearly stated in that

Memorandum. Sir Henry Bulwer shows that, after the death of Cetewayo, the Boers were invited in to assist the Zulus. Thereupon an arrangement was made between the Boers and the Zulus, of a nature which everyone might expect, with Boers on one side and ignorant Zulus on the other. It was very much in favour of the Boers. The Zulus agreed to give to the Boers land equal to 2,700,000 acres, about half of Zululand; at the same time giving them the right to establish an independent Republic, and placing themselves under the supervision and subject to the control of the new Republic. That arrangement Sir Henry Bulwer justly characterizes as disastrous. Under the circumstances, we had, however, no right to ignore that arrangement, and Sir Henry Bulwer advised that we should negotiate with the Boers. Lord Granville, in a despatch of March 11, 1886, instructed Sir Arthur Havelock to open negotiations with the Boers, and Sir Arthur Havelock acted on these instructions. I may quote a part of the despatch that bears on the position of the Zulus, which is important, since we have heard so much of the Zulus protesting and being much injured by the result of the arrangement which we have concluded with the Boers. Let us, therefore, see what was the condition of the Zulus when Sir Arthur Havelock began the negotiations. At page 50 he says—

“It is clear that the power of the Zulus is utterly broken. They have neither the heart, nor the strength to resist the Boers. Unless they receive support from Her Majesty's Government, they must eventually submit to any terms the Boers may think fit to impose.”

That shows that our intervention at this time was nothing short of the salvation of the Zulus, who would certainly have fallen a very easy prey to the Boers if we had not intervened. That action was approved by Lord Granville, and subsequently by my right hon. Friend my Predecessor at the Colonial Office (Mr. E. Stanhope); and Sir Arthur Havelock was requested to use every effort to settle the question before further difficulties and dangers should arise. I am not now going further into the negotiations, which are described in a despatch that will appear in the Papers which I will present at the earliest opportunity; but on the 22nd of October an agreement was signed by the Repre-

sentatives of the new Republic, by which the Protectorate over Zululand was abandoned by the Boers, and a new line of demarcation was settled. With respect to that line of demarcation the hon. Member for Caithness finds a good deal of fault, and I admit, at once, that there were great difficulties in regard to that line; and, if it could be done, I should be very glad to see those difficulties removed. They arise from the circumstance that, on the eastern side of the new line of demarcation, there are some 80 farms, held by some 200 or 300 Boers, and those farms are in Eastern Zululand, and under the protection of British authority; and I fear, as the hon. Member fears, that those difficulties which are apt to arise between the Boers and the Natives may occur. But, with the leave of the House, I will read what, of course, the hon. Member has not yet had an opportunity of seeing—a passage from the despatch of Sir Arthur Havelock, dated October 24th, 1886, in which he states the terms of the arrangement come to and describes the negotiations. He says—

“I do not consider the line of demarcation established under the terms of settlement to be satisfactory in all particulars; but I feel confident that, had I insisted on a line more favourable to the interests, and more in accordance with the wishes of the Zulus, I should have risked a complete failure of the negotiations;”

and I think it will be found that he was right in that. With regard to the trade route, to which great importance was attached, Sir Arthur Havelock was unable to bring the line of demarcation more to the east, and an exchange of territory was made to the north of Zululand. He goes on to say—

“The concession to the Boers of the portion of the country between the northern border of Zululand and the Mkusi River will tend to make more complete than it already is the isolation of Swaziland with regard to Zululand.”

Here I agree with the hon. Member in his observation as to the importance of keeping up our communication with Swaziland, and not to have the Boers coming in between us and that country. The despatch continues—

“I have sought to minimize this defect by making it a condition that a free right of passage from Mkusi to and across the Pongolo should be reserved for all persons of all nationalities without let or hindrance, and without payment of tolls or licence. Under the terms of settlement the Zulus will retain fully half the area of Zululand outside the Reserve territory,

and this half includes nearly the whole of that portion of the country lying between the White and Black Umfolosi, described as 'the cradle of the Zulu nation,' in which are situated Ulundi, the sites of the Royal residence and of the Royal burial places, and the kraals in which Dinizulu Umyamvana and the principal chiefs now reside."

Therefore, it is evident, from what has been stated, that, so far as the Zulus are concerned, they have not suffered under this agreement when you compare it with the state of things that existed under the arrangement with the Boers made in 1884. In a despatch from my right hon. Friend to Sir Arthur Havelock, dated November 2nd, 1886, it is said—

"Referring to your telegram of October 22, Her Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the agreement signed by you with the Leaders of the Boers, and you have authority to appoint Boundary Commissioners. They will be prepared to recommend to Her Majesty the assumption of British protection over Eastern Zululand, with the consent of the Zulus. The provisions of the Convention will have to be carefully considered, and provision made for giving free passage to traders."

Having run thus briefly through the negotiations and the arrangement that has been come to, I may mention two points in connection with the agreement. There is no doubt that the Zulu Chiefs have protested against this agreement; but their position has been materially and substantially improved by this arrangement, as compared with their desperate condition in the beginning of 1886, which Sir Arthur Havelock called a state of collapse. But it is incorrect to say that the Zulus were taken by surprise. Sir Arthur Havelock, in a despatch, shows that in March, in April, and in May, on several occasions, the Zulu Chiefs were told, in reply to their request, exactly what could and what could not be done for them; and he said to the last deputation of Zulus, who found themselves in difficulties and asked Her Majesty's Government to intervene on their behalf, that the Government were willing to help them; that they could not get for them all, or nearly all they wanted, but that the Government would try and get them something. The Chiefs, after that interview, thanked Sir Arthur Havelock for his reply to them, and therefore it is inaccurate to say that they have been taken by surprise, and it is equally incorrect to say that they were not

heard against the arrangement. They had interviews with the Secretary of Native Affairs in October, and interviews with Sir Arthur Havelock in November. Now that they have been told, and understand, that this agreement is final, and that British protection will be extended over Eastern Zululand, the principal Chiefs have expressed their approval of the arrangement; and I would urge on many persons, not only in this country, but in Natal, that the real friends of the Zulus are those who will now encourage them in that course, and not strive to keep up in them a spirit of discontent with the arrangement made. Every one of us would be glad to be able to do more for the Zulus; but it must be remembered that they themselves first placed us in a difficulty by inviting the Boers into Zululand. The Government are bound to the new Republic by the engagement they have made, and they cannot now recede from it. If, on any smaller points, a further arrangement can be made, with the consent of the new Republic, that would tend to remove difficulties or complications in the future, the Government would be only too glad to take that step. The second point I have partly dealt with already—namely, that connected with the trade route and the necessity of dealing with some 200 or 300 Boers and about 80 farms in Eastern Zululand. The compromise come to on that matter may not be altogether as satisfactory as could be desired; but it certainly was not effected without considerable difficulty. As Sir Arthur Havelock has pointed out, if he had insisted upon another line, there would have been probably a complete failure of the negotiations. What will be the position of the Boers in Eastern Zululand? They will possess the ordinary rights of ownership of the lands granted them; they will have no jurisdiction over the Natives; and they will be entitled under the agreement to be secured in those lands. I have been asked—but I regret that I must disappoint the House in this particular—what is to be the policy of Her Majesty's Government with respect, not only to Zululand, but to Bechuanaland and to Swaziland, although the hon. Member's Amendment is in terms confined to Zululand. I am free to admit that I think, speaking generally, that the time has arrived for a comprehen-

sive scheme for the settlement of the South African difficulties and complications. I am free to admit that, unless some such comprehensive scheme is settled, those dangers and difficulties which were pointed out by the hon. Member for Caithness may be anticipated. As regards Eastern Zululand, the Government are not prepared, as at present advised, to entertain the proposal made that Eastern Zululand should be annexed to Natal. There is no evidence, in the first place, that the Zulus desire annexation to Natal; and I think there is a very considerable, and very grave doubt how far the Natal laws and administration would be suited to Eastern Zululand. The finances of Natal, moreover, are in an unsatisfactory state, and are quite unable to bear the cost of establishing and maintaining Civil Establishments in a new and widely-extending territory; and, therefore, it is not intended, for the present at all events, that Eastern Zululand should be annexed to Natal. Then comes the question as to the government of Eastern Zululand. I can assure hon. Members that the subject is receiving very careful consideration at the hands of the Government. I think hon. Members who have studied the question will agree that the limited control at present exercised over the Reserve would not be sufficient in Eastern Zululand. We must have the power to establish Courts of Law, and to exercise a criminal jurisdiction, not only over Natives, but over British subjects and others within the territory. This we cannot at present do in the Reserve, and the question is now under consideration whether we can get sufficient powers under what is ordinarily recognized as a Protectorate, or whether we should have to annex Zululand at once. It has been suggested that we might bring Eastern Zululand under the control of the Governor of Natal, much in the same way as Bechuanaland is under the control of the Governor of Cape Colony; so as to legislate by Proclamation. I have mentioned those points in order to show that the matter is receiving careful consideration, but that the difficulties are very great. I will, of course, pay attention to the suggestion thrown out by the hon. Member for Caithness, with the object of seeing whether some kind of satisfactory arrangement could be made by which

the different rights of different countries would be settled once for all in South Africa. It is a very tempting scheme; but when such schemes come to be looked into, they are found to be more difficult than appeared at first sight. I hope I have shown two things to hon. Members—first, that this arrangement which has been so much cavilled at by the friends of the Zulus is an arrangement really calculated to benefit them, and to put them in a far better position than they were in at the beginning of 1886; and, secondly, that the questions connected not only with Zululand, but with other territories in South Africa, are receiving, and will receive, the careful consideration of the Government.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)— THE BARBAVILLA MURDER TRIAL.

MR. TUIE (Westmeath, N.) rose to move the following addition to the Address:—

“And humbly to represent to Your Majesty that it is the duty of Your Government to institute a full and searching inquiry into the means by which convictions were obtained against certain persons at present undergoing penal servitude for an alleged conspiracy to murder at Barbavilla, in the county of Westmeath.”

In support of his Motion the hon. Member recited at length the circumstances connected with the trial, and reviewed the evidence in order to show that it did not warrant a conviction. It had, he said, transpired since the trial that the evidence of the chief Crown witnesses, —the M'Keowns—was concocted, their statements being nothing short of a tissue of falsehood; and in the whole circumstances he contended that there was an unanswerable case for a full and impartial investigation. In England, whenever a conviction was impugned, the practice was to hold an impartial inquiry; but in Ireland there was no such inquiry. The inquiries held there were of such a character that Irishmen had no confidence in them. If an impartial inquiry was given, he believed that it would result in throwing open the prison gates. He would divide the House upon the question, and, if defeated, would take every opportunity of re-opening it.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the 12th paragraph, to insert the words—“And humbly to represent to Your Ma-

jesty that it is the duty of Your Government to institute a full and searching inquiry into the means by which convictions were obtained against certain persons at present undergoing penal servitude for an alleged conspiracy to murder at Barbavilla, in the county of Westmeath.”—(*Mr. Tuite.*)

Question proposed, “That those words be there inserted.”

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) said, he thought that it was a pity that in this Jubilee year of Her Majesty's Reign the Oriental custom which we had adopted in India of releasing prisoners had not been followed in Great Britain, in the gaols of which a large number of innocent prisoners were confined. [“Oh!”] It was the duty of those who held that opinion to bring before that House any evidence of which they had cognizance which would tend to show that those who had been found guilty of a crime had been unjustly convicted; with the object of satisfying the demand for inquiry made by the public, who cried out against these unjust convictions. Seven years ago there was committed in Ireland a foul and most brutal murder—an unjustifiable murder. [*A laugh.*] Well, all murders were unjustifiable. He did not offer a word in palliation of such a murder. He should be ashamed to say a word in defence of a crime of such a nature. It was an inhuman murder, and it was a crime against the laws both civil and divine. That murder took place at a time when the country was in a state of panic, and when the Government of the day itself was in a state of panic. The consequence was that the Government were anxious to secure a conviction by any and every means. Two ineffectual trials had taken place, and at the third trial the Law Officers of the Crown resorted to that expedient which was becoming so common in Ireland, and which was the scandal to the administration of the law—he meant the system of jury-packing. [*Cries of “Order!”*]

MR. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Member that he is not in Order in going into that subject.

MR. P. M'DONALD said, that he would, of course, bow to the Speaker's ruling; but, at the same time, it had been stated in the newspapers of the day that the jury had been selected for the occasion, probably from the men of independent thought. Owing to the

M'Keown's having concocted a story prepared for the purpose of obtaining a conviction of the men charged with this crime, the jury came to the conclusion that they were guilty, and they were now suffering from five to six years' imprisonment. After the conviction of these innocent men, the wife of one of the M'Keown's made a statement acknowledging that her husband had given false evidence, and that she had encouraged him to do so. The husband subsequently admitted that he had committed perjury. After these revelations had been made, a memorial was forwarded to the Lord Lieutenant praying for an inquiry into the case of these poor men. That had not been acceded to, and he now joined in the appeal of his hon. Friends to the Attorney General and the Chief Secretary to re-consider the matter, and grant an inquiry into the case.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I do not think that the speeches which have been made by hon. Gentlemen opposite have brought forward much that is new. Their speeches seem very strongly to resemble those which were delivered in this House in September last, and I am afraid that I can only repeat what I said on that occasion. One expression has been made use of by the hon. Gentleman who introduced the subject (Mr. Tuite) more than once, which it is necessary that I should notice. He has stated that the appeal which was made to the Lord Lieutenant in the case of the Barbavilla prisoners was decided by persons who had been interested in sustaining the conviction. Now I can assure the hon. Member that nothing can be further from the fact. There were no persons connected with the Irish Government who were interested in maintaining these convictions, or any other convictions which have been referred to from time to time in this House. No Member of the present Administration had anything whatever to do with the Government of Ireland at the time the prisoners in question were convicted. They were prosecuted by law officers nominated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and reference was made to the Lord Lieutenant of that period. There was no reason whatever why the present Administration should

not come to the consideration of the case with perfectly open minds. I may at once say that I have not the slightest intention of discussing in this House to-night the evidence given at the trials, which was commented on by the counsel on both sides and referred to by the learned Judges who directed the several juries, and which formed the basis of the verdicts of those juries. The prisoners in this particular case were defended by some of the ablest men at the Irish Bar. I have read the reports of the trials, and I can say that no single topic has been brought forward in this House which was not urged before the juries who convicted the prisoners. Nothing was omitted by the counsel who defended the prisoners. Both the Court and the jury had all the facts fairly before them; all the arguments that could be adduced on either side, and all the statements and reasons which could possibly influence their judgment. In the end they came to certain verdicts. Therefore, I am not prepared to re-try here a case which seems to me to have been tried by a proper tribunal who had all the facts before it. All I propose to refer to is what took place subsequently. The first conviction was obtained before the Lord Chief Baron in the month of April, 1884, and the subsequent conviction on the 9th of June in the same year. For some months afterwards no application was made to the Lord Lieutenant for the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. But somewhere towards the end of 1884 an application was made to the nobleman who was then Lord Lieutenant to exercise the prerogative of mercy. The case was carefully reviewed, and the result of the investigation was that the law was allowed to take its course.

MR. TUIE: An application was made a few weeks after the second batch of prisoners was convicted.

MR. HOLMES: All I know is that the case was very fully and carefully investigated by the Lord Lieutenant. I have seen the papers that were before him; I have seen the various subjects into which he inquired; I know the advice he sought, and I am satisfied that no person could have taken more care to see how the prerogative of the Crown could best be exercised than the noble Lord who, at that time, occupied the

position of Viceroy of Ireland. The result of the investigation was that the law was allowed to take its course. Now the friends of prisoners have a right to make fresh representations of any new facts which may arise; and they have a perfect right to call on those who represent the Crown to reopen the matter. In this case, the friends of the prisoners were not satisfied, and in the Autumn of 1885 all the facts were brought before Lord Carnarvon. No person could be more disposed to consider a case of this kind with care and caution, and with a strong leaning to the side of mercy, than that nobleman. I can assure hon. Members opposite that he entered into the case in the most full and complete manner; but anxious as he was to temper justice with mercy, he too came to the conclusion that the decision at which his Predecessor had arrived was a right decision, and that the law must take its course. A Viceroy has advantages in making inquiries which no one in this House possesses. He can communicate with the learned Judges who tried the case. In this case he did communicate with the learned Judges, of whom no less than three or four had taken part in the trials, and of course their judgment would guide him very much. If, with all these advantages, the Lord Lieutenant is unable to come to a correct conclusion in reference to a subject of this kind, I think it would be very difficult to ascertain how a correct conclusion can be arrived at. But that is not all. At a later date—I believe in the month of May last year—a different Viceroy of Ireland—Lord Aberdeen—considered the case. He had a right to do so, although the question had been brought before his Predecessor; and the result of his consideration was the same as before—namely, a confirmation of the view which had been taken by two of his Predecessors. In the month of October last the matter was brought under the notice of Lord Londonderry, the present Lord Lieutenant, and the same decision was arrived at. It will, therefore, be seen that the verdicts received the approbation of the learned Judges who tried the cases; and that the subsequent investigation by successive Viceroys disclosed no new facts that would justify the verdicts being displaced. On the last occasion I stated

that the case would be brought before the Viceroy. It was so brought, and, after careful consideration, the decision of the Viceroy was announced. In the month of November last the hon. Gentleman addressed a letter to the Lord Lieutenant. The letter contained no new facts; but it referred in particular to a statement made by Constable Fitzgerald.

MR. TUITE: I did not state that there were any new facts; but I referred to facts which had occurred since the trials.

MR. HOLMES: The fact is that the statement of Constable Fitzgerald was not only before Lord Aberdeen and Lord Carnarvon, but it was also before Lord Spencer. The statement itself has been read by the hon. Gentleman to-night. I have had an opportunity of seeing that statement, and of comparing it with another statement by Constable Fitzgerald contained in a letter written to his superior officer. Constable Fitzgerald was asked if he had ever made the statement referred to by the hon. Member; and, also, whether he had made the statement which is contained in his letter to his commanding officer. He answered both questions in the affirmative. He said that he had made a statement in the month of September, 1884, and that, in the same month, he had addressed a letter containing the same statement to his chief. Now, it so happened that the letter which he had written was forthcoming. I have had an opportunity of reading it, and I find that there is the greatest possible divergence between the two statements. In point of fact, the statements upon which the hon. Member relies are not contained in that letter at all. After careful consideration, we came to the conclusion that Constable Fitzgerald was under the impression that he had made certain statements, but that his letter was written in such a state of mental excitement as rendered it unreasonable to hold the writer responsible for the statements contained in it.

MR. TUITE: We have the statement made by the constable in our possession, and it is signed with his own hand.

MR. HOLMES: No doubt Constable Fitzgerald made the statement which the hon. Member has referred to; but he always asserted that, at the same

time, he had made a similar statement to his commanding officer in November, 1884. We have that letter, and, comparing it with the statement, there is not the slightest resemblance between the two. Moreover, he states in his letter that he has written all he is able to assert. When we find the constable making two statements, in the same month, differing so much in their character, it is impossible to place much reliance on them. They have evidently been written in such a state of mental excitement that it would be cruelty to any man to hold him responsible for them. I do not think it is necessary to say more. We have had precisely the same discussion to-night as we had in the month of September last. I do not think it would be a very useful occupation for the House to indulge in a prolongation of the debate. The facts of the case have been fully considered by the Court and the jury; they were also discussed in the House last year, and it would be most inconvenient to go into these matters again. I believe that whoever occupies these Benches must give the same answer that I have given.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I do not propose to occupy the attention of the House for many minutes, while I call attention to another case in which there was not a single drop of blood shed, and yet a dozen men were sent to prison. If there had been anything like a conspiracy to murder, it would have got abroad somehow or other, and somebody living in the locality would have heard of it. But even the Royal Irish Constabulary, who are pretty well acquainted with the feeling that exists throughout the country, when any conspiracy is being hatched, knew nothing of this; and the general feeling of the country is, that there has been a great miscarriage of justice in the conviction of the unfortunate men to whom I refer. I think it is a case in which, upon the recommendation of the Government, the Prerogative of mercy might be exercised by the Crown. We are often told from the other side of the House that it would be becoming, on the part of the Irish Nationalist Members, if they would assist the Government in controlling the affairs of Ireland. Now, I know of no better means by which the Irish Na-

tionalist Members could assist the Government in performing the difficult task of governing unfortunate Ireland than by bringing cases of this kind under their notice. It is all very well for the Government to say that it is their duty to maintain the law; the law may be maintained without resorting to harsh and tyrannical measures. There ought to be justice tempered with mercy; and the majority of the Irish peasants are under the impression that in matters of this kind there is very little either of mercy or justice, although there may be a good deal of law. In agrarian matters the Irish people look for neither mercy nor justice from Her Majesty's Courts of Law. It is unfortunate that that should be so; and I think that something might be done to remedy the state of feeling which now exists in Ireland, if Her Majesty's Government would give the matter their careful consideration.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): In regard to the Barbavilla case, I would remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland that fresh facts have come to our knowledge which are not in the possession of the Government; and there would be great difficulty in putting them in possession of those facts, unless they consent to grant the inquiry for which we ask. I would also point out to the right hon. and learned Gentleman that one of the jurors who tried the Barbavilla case has distinctly stated that if he had known that the two M'Keowns had had an opportunity of communicating with each other, he would not have been a party to a conviction. We shall be able to prove that the two M'Keowns were in communication with each other, and that they concocted their story in consequence. I can assure the House that we do not go back upon this matter with any amount of pleasure; it is only a sense of duty that induces us to bring it forward. It is a story we cannot look on with anything but a feeling of shame. But we know that at the time the deed was done bribes of an enormous amount were offered which would have had the effect of bringing about perjury not only in Ireland, but in any other country in the world. Under these circumstances I sincerely hope the right

hon. and learned Gentleman will use his influence with the Government to enable us to place before them the fresh facts we have been able to obtain.

Question put, and *negatived*.

Address *agreed to*:—To be presented by Privy Councillors.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 1.]

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr Jackson.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): It is not my intention to proceed with this Bill to-night, but to propose that the Committee be deferred till Monday. I would, however, like to ask hon. Members below the Gangway opposite whether they intend to persist in the numerous Amendments which they have put on the Paper. If they do so, it will be impossible for me to proceed with the Bill further. The Amendments really open up a wide field of questions which ought not to be discussed at all.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has, by the appeal he has made, put us in a position of some difficulty. The Bill of which he has given Notice to take the Committee on Monday next raises a somewhat large question. I do not intend to discuss the provisions of the measure; but I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that there is really no urgency whatsoever in the matter with which the Bill proposes to deal. Upon a previous occasion the right hon. Gentleman has asserted as a reason for bringing in the Bill that the Court of Common Pleas cannot be fully constituted until the appointment suggested is made. That is not the fact. The Court of Common Pleas is fully constituted with two Judges, and under the present system two Judges can sit.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is now discussing the merits of the Bill.

Committee *deferred till Monday next*.

FIRST OFFENDERS BILL.—[BILL 132.]

(*Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Addison, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, 'That the Bill be now read a second time.'—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne), in rising to move the second reading of this Bill, said, I do not think that it is one which will promote any sort of opposition from any part of the House; indeed, it is one that has already received the sanction of this House, and been read a third time. It is to do away with an inconvenience which those who have to administer justice sometimes feel when they have brought before them persons accused of offences for the first time, and against whom the offences are proved. Often a youth who has committed some offence, or a servant girl who has been guilty of a slight act of pilfering, is brought up and although the case is proved, the magistrates feel very strongly the cruelty of sending such offender to prison, thus making him or her one of the criminal class, and subjecting him or her to the contaminations of the prison surroundings. This modest Bill merely proposes to give the magistrates the power—not to compel them—when a person is brought before them for the first time charged with an offence punishable with imprisonment only, to direct that he shall be conditionally released upon probation of good conduct. I believe that legislation of this kind is in operation in some of the American States—in the State of Massachusetts for instance—and I am told that, quite lately, Bills of this kind were passed in some of our own Colonies. I hope there will be no opposition at all to the second reading, which I now beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Addison.*)

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Mr. Speaker, in supporting the second reading, I will trouble the House with but few observations. The object of all legislation in relation to crime should be to prevent future crime, not merely to

inflict punitive vengeance, and it is because I feel that this Bill proceeds in that direction that I desire to support it. The efforts already made in the direction of reformation have diminished crime. I connect that diminution of crime in the last few years more particularly to the progress of education. This salutary effect of education is increasing, as shown by the remarks of the various Judges of Assize. I believe this Bill will so protect some people from being rendered permanently criminal by the contagion of imprisonment, and therefore I heartily support it.

MR. SCLATER-BOOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): Sir, I think the House is indebted to my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Addison) for introducing this Bill; but I should be glad to hear from my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) whether he is able to support it as it at present stands, or whether he thinks it requires any amendment. In my opinion, many criminals are sent to prison who would be much better out on probation; and I do not think there is the danger which used to be apprehended of the people whom the Bill is intended to benefit being at large. I trust the Secretary of State will be able to see his way to support the Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Sir, I must admit I have had some difficulty in understanding what the objects of the framers of this Bill are. I think my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Addison), who moved the second reading, must be aware that by the Summary Conviction Act, 1879, all Courts of Summary Jurisdiction have very much the power he proposes to confer upon them. A Court of Summary Jurisdiction may now, without proceeding to a conviction, dismiss any information which is laid before them and order the person charged to pay damages not exceeding 40s. and costs, or either of those things. Furthermore, the Court has power now to discharge. [Mr. Addison: Oh, oh!] I hear my hon. and learned Friend express dissent; I think he can hardly have read the section. A Court of Summary Jurisdiction can now, upon conviction, discharge the person convicted, upon condition of him giving security, with or without sureties, to

appear for sentence in Court, or to be of good behaviour, or upon payment of damages and costs, or either of them, as the Court may think fit. I hardly know in what way my hon. and learned Friend's view will be promoted by the clauses of this Bill. The intention of enabling any Court—a Court of Assize or otherwise—to avoid sending a first offender to prison is a good one. If that were an object not attainable in the present state of the law, I should be entirely in favour of any Bill having such an object. I believe that by the Act of 1879 the power in question was given to Courts of Summary Jurisdiction, and that they possess it now in an ample way. I admit that the power in the hands of Judges of Assize or of the Superior Courts or Quarter Sessions is not so ample. I believe those Courts can only discharge an offender upon him giving security to appear for sentence when called upon to do so. That, however, in effect, enables the Superior Courts to release a first offender without sending him to prison; therefore, the objects that are sought by this Bill are perfectly capable of attainment by the law as it stands. On the other hand, let the House consider for a moment what the framers of this Bill propose to do. The promoters of the Bill propose to allow the Court to dismiss a first offender without sentencing him, but to make him subject to the provisions of the Prevention of Crime Acts of 1871 and 1879. I do not know whether the House realizes how extremely penal those Acts are. Under these Acts convicts or habitual offenders are subjected to police supervision, which involves penalties of a penal character. A person who is released on licence is required to report his residence periodically, and if he fails to report himself he is liable to a year's imprisonment with hard labour. It will thus be seen that, by this Bill, if a first offender does not comply with the conditions laid down upon his release, he will be subjected to a year's imprisonment, which is probably a much longer period than that by which his offence in the first instance is punishable. But there are other conditions which attach by the Prevention of Crime Acts of 1871 and 1879. If a licensee associates with bad characters—a rather elastic phrase, which may extend to various classes of society—he is liable,

under the Prevention of Crime Acts, to three months with hard labour. That, equally, might be the utmost sentence which might be passed upon persons for certain offences. Then, again, if the person subject to the police supervision has no possible means of obtaining a honest livelihood, which is a fate not uncommon in many classes of society, he is liable to be brought up and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. I really do submit to my hon. and learned Friend that the police supervision to which he proposes to subject first offenders is unnecessary, harsh, and severe. I imagine it is the desire of the framers of this Bill to have some treatment intermediary between sending a first offender to prison and letting him go scot-free, and in that desire I entirely concur; and, if the Bill could be modified to bring about that end, I should heartily welcome it. Then, I think the promoters of the Bill might have introduced some provision with regard to juvenile offenders. I should be extremely glad, for instance, if in the case of juvenile offenders power were conferred upon the Courts of Summary Jurisdiction to summon before them the parents, and inflict upon them a fine. I believe some such modification of the mode of proceeding against first offenders would be extremely valuable; but this drastic way of putting first offenders under Acts of Parliament which were intended to deal with habitual criminals and convicts out on licence—the very worst criminal classes we have in the country—seems to me not quite in accordance with my hon. and learned Friend's intentions—intentions with which I entirely sympathize. Perhaps the hardest cases are those in which imprisonment is inflicted because the offenders cannot pay a fine. There are numerous cases where the punishment usually imposed is a fine, and, in default of payment, imprisonment. There are cases of imprisonment, especially in the cases of first offenders, I am very sorry to see. One cannot regard poverty in every instance as a crime; and, therefore, persons who are most deserving of sympathy are left outside the scope of the Bill. The 2nd clause of the Bill—there are practically only two clauses in the Bill—seems to be totally inadmissible, inasmuch as it violates all the rules which Parliament has observed in

legislation affecting crime. I do not like to seem so ungracious as to oppose the second reading of a Bill which contains the germs of a useful idea; but I am bound to say that those germs have been hardly properly developed—indeed, I am afraid the Bill will work a bad, instead of a good, change. My right hon. Friend (Mr. Selater-Booth) suggested that the Bill might be taken up by the Government, and remodelled. If the sponsors of the measure will be willing to entrust it to the care of the Government draftsman, I will do my best to see it put in such a shape that it will work a beneficial change in the law, and not impose on first offenders hardships and penalties much more severe than they ought to be subjected to. Having stated these objections, I shall offer no further opposition to the second reading.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I desire to say a few words in support of the second reading of the Bill. It is a Bill in which I have taken the deepest interest; and I see many hon. Gentlemen now in the House who will, perhaps, recollect the signal unanimity with which the measure was received in the last Parliament. The Bill passed through all its stages in the last Parliament; indeed, not one word of exception was taken to any one of its provisions. It is true that it was stopped in the House of Lords; and I had some reason to complain of the course the then Administration took as regards it. The Government of the day allowed the Bill to go quietly through all the stages in this House; but they stopped it in "another place," where it was impossible for me to meet any of the objections which were raised to it. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) has said that he has considerable difficulty in ascertaining what are the motives of the framers of the measure in submitting it to the judgment of the House. The desire of the framers of the Bill is to endeavour to do something to prevent first offenders being turned, by imprisonment, into habitual criminals; to endeavour to do something to convert those who have committed a first offence into honest men and useful members of society. I am sure the House was impressed by the statement of my hon. and learned

Friend (Mr. Addison), that a measure of this kind has worked for many years with signal success in Massachusetts. It is no new experiment which we are seeking to introduce. What we propose has worked amongst our own race, and under a similar system of jurisprudence to our own, for eight years past, with great success; in fact, the result has been 2,600 reformed lives, and a saving in hard cash of no less than £10,000. I feel sure the House will recognize that that is certainly a tangible result. I wish to repeat the statement of the Mover of the second reading—that what we propose has been adopted in the Colonies of New Zealand and of Queensland. It was unanimously adopted by both Houses of Legislature in those Colonies. The House will, of course, recognize the difficulty I labour under in following the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary, who is so well versed in all the intricacies of the law; but, even after what he has said, hon. Members will, I am sure, feel that the Bill deserves their favourable consideration. My right hon. and learned Friend has said that he does see in the Bill the germs of a good change in the law. I hope, therefore, he will allow the second reading to pass. He has said, if we will entrust the Bill to the Government draftsman, he will do his best to make a good measure of it. I shall very gladly adopt that course. No Party interests are concerned in the Bill; and, therefore, I entreat hon. Members of both sides to agree to the second reading. I do so because I am perfectly certain that the Bill is capable of efficient administration, and that it will have a very great tendency to reduce crime, and to reduce the expenses incurred in the maintenance of criminals in the country.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): My name appears on the back of the Bill, and I wish to say that the measure has my hearty concurrence. The Bill was brought forward last year; it was passed unanimously by this House, and therefore it is rather astonishing to find the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), who, of all persons, should take an interest in any measure having such an object as this, disposed to throw cold water upon the Bill. I should have thought the right hon. and learned Gentleman would have been the first

person in the House to have welcomed any Bill of this character; but he has made a speech criticizing the Bill in all its details; in fact, his speech was a conglomeration of speeches, only fit for the Committee stage. The object of the Bill is one of which we can all approve; why, then, should the Home Secretary, whose duty it is to support every step in this direction, throw cold water upon the measure? My advice to the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Addison) is, that he should proceed with the Bill to a Division, because we are, as a House, pledged to the Bill, and the observations which were made by the Home Secretary are observations which can be dealt with in Committee.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): Mr. Speaker, as my name appears on the back of the Bill, I should like to say a few words before the Debate closes. I have taken considerable interest in this subject for many years; but I quite admit the force of all that has been said by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) as to the difficulties surrounding the treatment of the persons we have in view. I know how serious are the provisions of the law relating to police supervision, and I can understand the alarm with which my right hon. and learned Friend views the proposal to extend such a system to first offenders in certain cases. But what I have always had in view has been to extend, if possible, the power which Petty Sessional Courts and Quarter Sessions have at present to let persons out on their own recognizances; a power which, I think, is most useful, but which is so seldom exercised at the present time. I would urge the House, if it affirm the principle, at all events, of extending to first offenders some more lenient means of punishment than the necessity of prison discipline, which is now almost the only means available. At the same time, I would advise my hon. Friend the Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent), who really has brought in this Bill, to adopt the suggestion of the Home Secretary, and allow the Government draftsman, in company with my hon. Friend himself, to go over the Bill and endeavour to surmount the difficulties which the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) has mentioned. We are all anxious to see first

offenders treated in such a way as will enable them to come back to society, without being subjected to the contamination of prison discipline. By the adoption of the suggestion of the Home Secretary, it is very probable a solution of the difficulty may be arrived at.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of the Home Secretary to minutely examine and criticize the details of all Bills dealing with the Criminal Law of the country; and, therefore, so far from accusing the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) of throwing cold water upon this Bill, the House is indebted to him for pointing out what are the obvious defects in the Bill as it at present stands. Of course, I sympathize with the objects of the measure as explained by the promoters. I had great satisfaction in serving on the Summary Jurisdiction Committee some time ago, and in taking part in the drawing up of the very provisions to which the Home Secretary has alluded; and which place it in the power of every Court of Petty Sessions to deal with first offenders in the lenient way the hon. and learned Gentleman has described. There is one provision in this measure which commends itself to me, and that is that the powers in question can be extended either to the High Court or the Court of Quarter Sessions or other Criminal Courts. I trust the House will not be put to the necessity of dividing upon the second reading; but that my hon. Friend (Mr. Howard Vincent) who is responsible for the introduction of the Bill, will accept the offer made to him by the Home Secretary—namely, that the Bill should be read a second time, upon the clear understanding that it should be remodelled under the advice of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I heartily approve of anything that can be done to amend the Criminal Law, so as to prevent the stain of imprisonment attaching to first offenders. There are dangers in the Bill; indeed as it stands I think the Bill might do more harm than good.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): As a very earnest supporter of this Bill I hope the House will allow me to express the hope that there will be no more talk upon it. There is another very important measure to come on, and practically, we are all agreed as to the principle. There is nothing more to fight about,

and hon. Members on this side of the House are quite content to leave the Bill in the hands of the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) to elaborate it, and make it effective for the humane purpose we have in view. [*Cries of "Divide!"*]

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Notwithstanding the impatience of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, I trust I may be allowed to say a word or two on this Bill, because it is a Bill in which I also have taken considerable interest, and to the provisions of which I have given some attention. The hon. Member (Mr. Howard Vincent) who introduced this Bill last year has made some observations with regard to the fact that the Bill was stopped in the House of Lords. Well, Sir, I do not think that was the fault of any of the present Advisers of Her Majesty; if any blame did attach to anyone, it must be visited upon the heads of the right hon. Gentlemen who now sat on the Front Opposition Bench. Probably there were reasons which made it difficult to pass the Bill last year. Certainly this Bill does require some careful consideration, and the House ought to understand its provisions a little more thoroughly, I will not say before they assent to the principle, but before they assent to its passing. I entirely agree that the Bill should be read a second time; but I wish the House to appreciate one or two matters they will have to consider in reference to the further progress of the measure. It is not quite right to suggest that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) threw any cold water upon the intentions, or spoke disparagingly of the intentions, of those who have introduced the Bill. I heard the whole of my right hon. and learned Friend's speech, and I think the House will agree with me he simply pointed out the serious defects, not only of detail, but also of principle which require consideration. There is no doubt it is necessary that the Bill should be remodelled, in order that the real intentions of the framers of the Bill should have some practical effect given to them. I would point to a matter which will commend itself to lawyers in this House, and of course it is necessary that a Bill of this kind should be criticized by some of those who have experience of the practice of the law; it is proposed

that the Bill should be confined at present to offences for which a person might be sentenced to imprisonment with or without hard labour. Probably those who framed the Bill, not having for the moment all the offences before their minds, forgot that cases of larceny and embezzlement, which can be punished with penal servitude, would be excepted from the operation of the Bill. If it is desired that this Bill shall protect juvenile offenders from the contamination of prisoners, there is probably no offence in respect of which it is more likely to be applied than that of small larceny. There is another very important matter which has already been referred to by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) and others who have addressed the House, and that is that the Bill proposes that the persons who are released upon probation may be subject to the provisions of the Prevention of Crime Acts of 1871 and 1879. I have no intention of detailing the stringent nature of those provisions; it was pointed out with accuracy by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, although at the time one of the provisions seemed to be not quite understood by some of my Friends behind me. I venture to suggest that it will have to be considered whether the Bill should apply to first offenders without any limitation as to age. We think that the Bill requires revision, having regard to the fact that if it passed into law, first offenders would be subject to the provisions of the Acts of 1871 and 1879. The words of the Bill are that first offenders should be "conditionally released." I think the House should make up its mind as to what should be required of offenders released under this Bill, because it would not be proper to apply to them the principles which guide Criminal Courts in the cases of older offenders; and I venture to think that those who support the Bill should consider whether a clause should not be inserted to ensure that there should be some check on the conduct of those who are released without punishment. I also think it would be of very great advantage if the House had a little more knowledge of the working in other countries of laws which have provisions similar to those in the present Bill. An hon. Member has told us that a similar law has been passed in Massachusetts,

and we know that in some of our Colonies, also, similar laws are in existence; but we have not been informed as to their operation, and I think it is important that those in this House who desire to see this amendment of the law should be told under what conditions those Acts have operated and have been found successful. I have no desire, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department has no desire, to depreciate the intentions of those who have introduced this Bill. On the contrary, our wish is to give every assistance in properly remodelling it; and it is with the hope of doing this, consistently with the principle of the measure, that I trust the House will agree to the Motion for the second reading.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Sir, it is my duty to state that when this Bill—which was brought in at the beginning of last Session, but was only printed some months later, and just before it stood for a second reading—came before me at the Home Office, I found it to contain principles of such grave importance, that I considered it my duty to refer it for the opinion and report of certain Judges, Chairmen of Sessions, Police Magistrates, and others, whose views, derived from experience, would be of value. These reports, however, had not been received when the Dissolution, after the defeat of the late Government, was determined upon; and I concluded that no further progress would be made with the Bill, when I left town to canvass my constituents. It, however, passed this House in my absence and that of my colleague at the Home Office, but was properly stopped in the House of Lords. I have only to add, on the question whether the Bill is a wise one and one which ought to be adopted by the House, that I consider that it contains the germs of valuable legislation; but it contains much to which there is grave objection, and I trust that if the Bill be read a second time, it will be dealt with in the manner proposed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I desire to make a suggestion with regard to this Bill. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has pointed out that in order to make the Bill of value it is

necessary that some reference should take place to those experienced in legal drafting; and, secondly, it is said that we should be guided by the working of similar provisions in other countries. Both these objects would be accomplished, and the Bill would be more likely to pass from this House in such a condition that no difficulty should arise afterwards by its being referred to a Select Committee, and I suggest that it should be so referred, if the Motion for the second reading is agreed to.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Sir, as the hon. Member has protracted his frequent discussion of this Bill until half-past 12 o'clock, I trust he will not be dissatisfied if we, on these Benches, now have our innings. Although I think that hon. Members on both sides of the House should be very jealous of the treatment of first offenders—that the most severe punishment should not be meted out to them—yet I do not see the advantage of passing a Bill of which neither the 1st nor the 2nd Clause is in harmony with the views of the House. Further, the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary has stated that, even if the Bill were to get the sanction of the House, these clauses would be inoperative and nugatory. I am sure that this House joins with the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Addison) in his spirit of leniency to first offenders; but I think, with all sincerity and seriousness, that it is hardly possible to make a rule that first offenders should get off scot-free; and, further, I am of opinion that it might happen that magistrates in Ireland would avail themselves of the Bill, in order to liberate some of their friends who ought, for first offences committed by them, to be sent to prison. If the Bill does not ensure the object in view, I think the best course would be to accept the proposal of the right hon. and learned Gentleman that he should confer with his Colleagues upon the provisions of the measure. Without any desire to spin out the present discussion, I venture to say that the Bill has not yet received the consideration which the importance of the subject demands; and, therefore, I feel it my duty to oppose the Motion for the second reading, and to move that it be read this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Edward Harrington.*)

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived*.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. E. R. RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton): Sir, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: Does any hon. Member second that Motion?

[No reply.]

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed for Monday 7th March*.

CUSTOMS CONSOLIDATION ACT (1876) AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Seymour King,
Mr. Gourley.*)

[BILL 155.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Sir, as I understand the second reading of this Bill will not be opposed by the Government, and as I do not anticipate any opposition to the Motion I am about to make, I need simply state that the Bill is intended to prevent the arbitrary imprisonment of persons and forfeiture of ships in cases of alleged smuggling. The present law is that if a vessel enters a port with contraband goods concealed on board, the ship is absolutely forfeited, and the crew and passengers are liable to detention, a fine of £100, and to imprisonment until payment. My proposal is to provide that this shall not be the law with regard to either the vessel or those on on board unless there is reason to believe that there has been complicity on the part of the owner of the ship or of the persons on board respectively. If the Motion for the second reading is agreed to, I am willing that the Committee stage of the Bill should be deferred.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Sir, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government,

it is not necessary for me to oppose the second reading of this Bill. The hon. Member in charge of the Bill (Sir Albert Rollit) has stated to the House the condition on which he takes the second reading—namely, that the Committee stage of the measure shall be deferred, in order that the Government may have an opportunity of considering whether they will accept it in its present form, or propose any alteration. It is not necessary for me, at this late hour (12.40), to detain the House with many remarks upon the character of the Bill; and accordingly I will only remind hon. Members that the proposal which my hon. Friend makes is, practically, to go back to what was the condition of the law formerly—that is to say, before the year 1876, when an Act was passed which did not contain a clause that was in the previous Acts. The House will possibly feel that there will be some difficulty in accepting the words—"Reasonable grounds for the exemption of the owner of a ship from his liability." The offence of smuggling is one that stands very much by itself. I am told it is held by a very large number of people to be an offence not very serious in itself; but I would remind the House that the Customs of this country are responsible for more than £20,000,000 of the Revenue. I think the House will therefore admit that before you make any change in the law which might in any sense weaken the power of those who have to administer it, and assist in the collection of this enormous Revenue, the greatest care should be taken, and the most careful consideration should be given to the question. It is unnecessary for me to say more on the present occasion. I will not oppose the second reading of the Bill.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I feel it right to say one word in reference to this Bill, as hon. Members will probably have seen that until to-night I had a block against the Bill to prevent it from coming on after half past 12 o'clock. I would explain—if I may be permitted to do so—the reason why I put down the block, and the reason why I took it off. I put a block against this Bill, and probably against some 50 other Tory measures, because the Tory Whip placed a block against a Bill of mine before it was printed, and even before I had finished drafting it. Now,

I quite admit that the practice of blocking is one that should be used with discrimination; but I cannot conceive that there is any discrimination whatever exercised on the part of the Representative of the Tory Party, when he blocks a Bill which has not yet passed from the drafter's hands. I do not consider, and I do not think any right-minded man in this House will consider, that that is fair treatment of a political opponent. As the only defence in my power, I have placed a block against every Tory measure that I could find. At the earnest instance of the hon. Member (Sir Albert Rollit), who has moved the second reading of this Bill, I removed the block last night, and I am now very pleased to give the Bill my support. [*Laughter.*] Well, so I am. I understand perfectly well what the measure is—what the object of it is, and what the grievance is it is intended to remove. It is not a matter that has come under my notice to-day for the first time; and if I choose to support a measure, even if it be a Tory measure, I shall do so whether hon. Gentlemen opposite laugh or not. If any hon. Gentlemen opposite feel themselves aggrieved or inconvenienced by the course that has been forced on me—and I know that I have personal friends opposite who do feel inconvenience—I beg to say it is their own Tory Whip who is to blame. So long as he continues to adopt unfair practices, I shall continue the course I originally adopted in the case of this Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Friday 18th March.

QUESTION.

—o—

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—PREMATURE PUBLICATION OF THE MERCHANTIZE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I wish to ask your permission, Sir, to put a Question to the Secretary to the Board of Trade, of which I have given him private Notice. Perhaps you will permit me to explain, in one sentence, that the reason I adopt this unusual course is because the Question which I wish, with your permission, to put refers

to a matter of Privilege, and, therefore, to a matter of urgency. I wish to ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been called to the publication, in *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* newspaper, of a summary of the Merchandize Marks Bill, before the measure was in the hands of Members of this House; and whether, in that case, he can inform the House of the source of that journal's information?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I would ask, as this is a species of debate, whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Brightside) (Mr. Mundella) was informed of what is about to take place? It seems only reasonable to the right hon. Gentleman, as this is a matter that concerns him, that he should have an opportunity of being in his place. I really think that, seeing that it is so unusual for a Question to be asked at this hour, if the right hon. Gentleman did not know it was to be put it should be deferred until he is present.

MR. BYRON REED: In the course of the evening, as soon as I heard what had taken place, I wrote a letter to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella), and sent it to him by one of the messengers of the House.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to the hon. Member for East Bradford I have to say that my attention has been called to the publication of an accurate summary of the Merchandize Marks Bill appearing in *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* of this morning. I have no knowledge of the source from which this information was obtained. I have made strict inquiry at the Board of Trade, and can state that it was not communicated by anyone in that Department. Only a certain very limited number of copies were supplied; they were in the hands of the head of the Department, and can be accounted for as follows:—At the request of the hon. Members for the Brightside (Mr. Anthony J. Mundella), Hallam (Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley), Central (Mr. C. E. Howard Vincent), and Ecclesall (Mr. E. Ashmead-Bartlett) Divisions of Sheffield, the President authorized advanced copies to be supplied to them. This was done, and by last night's post two

copies were sent to the Cutlers' Company and to the Town Clerk. I may add that these copies could only have been delivered at Sheffield this morning at 8 o'clock. The two remaining copies were in the possession of the President and myself. In order to prevent a breach of the Privileges of this House by the premature publication of a Bill not then in the hands of Members, the President wrote the following Minute, which was endorsed on each copy, and bore the President's signature:—

"To be considered as strictly confidential, and not to be communicated, directly or indirectly, to the Press, as such publication has been decided by the House of Commons to be a breach of Privilege."

In view of these facts, I thought it my duty to ask the hon. Member for the Central (Mr. Howard Vincent), Hallam (Mr. Stuart-Wortley), and Ecclesall (Mr. Ashmead - Bartlett) Divisions, whether this unauthorized publication was in any way to be attributed to them? I had not the opportunity of asking the right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella), Member for the Brightside Division, because I could not find him in his place, else I would have put the same question to him. I have received from the other Gentlemen I have mentioned their positive assurances that such is not the case; and I may add that the Bill in question does not appear in the Conservative organ which is published at Sheffield, nor, so far as I know, in any other newspaper in the United Kingdom.

MOTIONS.

—o—

OLEOMARGARINE (FRAUDULENT SALE)

BILL.

On Motion of Sir Richard Paget, Bill for the better prevention of the Fraudulent Sale of Oleomargarine, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Slater-Booth, Mr. Elton, and Mr. Mark Stewart.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 175.]

SUPPLY.

Resolved, That this House will, on *Monday* next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Ordered, That the several Estimates presented to this House, during the

Baron Henry De Worms

present Session, be referred to the Committee of Supply.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolved, That this House will, upon *Monday* next, resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

House adjourned at ten minutes before
One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 21st February, 1887.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILL — *Committee* —
Lunacy Acts Amendment (7).

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — SIR
THOMAS ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF
OF THE COUNTY OF WATERFORD.

POSTPONEMENT OF QUESTION.

LORD BRABOURNE, who had on the Paper a Notice "to call attention to the appointment of Sir Thomas Esmonde, M.P., as High Sheriff of County Waterford, and to ask for an explanation," said, it might be convenient to their Lordships to state that he had been asked by the Government to postpone the Question, of which he had given Notice, to a future evening. He therefore proposed to postpone it until Friday, the 4th of March, unless in the meantime the Government should make some statement which would relieve him from the necessity of calling attention to the subject, or of asking any Question at all.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 7.) COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in moving, as an Amendment, that it be an Instruction to the Committee, that the numbering of the clauses throughout the Bill should be amended, so that every clause, whether

now numbered as a section or a sub-section, might be numbered as a successive section of "substantive enactments," and that all references in the Bill be altered accordingly, said, that Lord Brougham, in 1850, passed a Bill, by which every section was to be deemed substantive in itself, and should be numbered by itself, for the purpose of easy reference in Courts of Law. But, afterwards, a more complicated provision was gradually introduced, and not only sections, but sub-sections and sub-sub-sections had been adopted, doing precisely the opposite of what was intended by that Act. This system was extremely inconvenient, and that seemed to him to be a fitting opportunity to instruct those who drew up Bills to prepare them in the way that was suggested by the Act of 1850.

Amendment moved,

"That the numbering of the clauses throughout the Bill be amended, so that every clause (whether now numbered as a section or a sub-section) be numbered as successive sections of 'substantive enactments' (except those now indicated by letters prefixed, and which are parts of one sentence), and that all references in the Bill be altered accordingly." —(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he objected to the Instruction, and hoped it would not be agreed to. The present system of dividing the main clauses of Bills into many sub-sections had been in use for a good many years—20 years at least. There might be something to be said both for and against it; but he was against interfering with it in the case of this Bill, which had been prepared by a very careful draftsman, and was as good a piece of work as it could be. If their Lordships were now to debate the Instruction of the noble and learned Lord, they would be called upon to discuss the general question how—all Bills were to be drawn. He trusted the House would at once go into Committee on the Bill.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

Clauses 1 and 2 severally agreed to.

Clause 3 (Orders for reception of private patients to be made by county court judge, magistrate, or justice).

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in moving, as an Amendment, to leave out Sub-sec-

tions 9, 10, and 11, for the purpose of substituting other words, said, the three sub-sections in question provided that the judge, magistrate, or justice to whom a petition had been presented should give the alleged lunatic notice thereof, unless such notice would be prejudicial to the lunatic or dangerous to the public, that the judge or magistrate may—and must if required by the alleged lunatic—have a personal interview with the alleged lunatic in the absence of the petitioner and the certifying practitioners, and that the petition should be considered within seven days. In lieu of these provisions he proposed to insert the following:—

"Upon the presentation of the petition the judge, magistrate, or justice shall consider the evidence of lunacy appearing by the medical certificates, and whether it is necessary for him personally to see and examine the alleged lunatic; and, if he is satisfied that an order may properly be made forthwith, he may make the same accordingly; or, if not so satisfied, he shall appoint as early a time as practicable, not being more than seven days after the presentation of the petition, for the consideration thereof; and he may make such further or other inquiries of or concerning the alleged lunatic as he may think fit, and for that purpose may summon any person or persons to give evidence, and may take evidence on oath; and notice of the time and place appointed for such inquiry (unless personally given to the petitioner) shall be sent to him by post in a registered letter addressed to him at his address as given in the petition."

It would be seen that he proposed to leave out the notice from the magistrate and the interview, as contained in the Bill at present; for, as he viewed them, their only use would be to facilitate the escape of alleged lunatics, and impose upon their friends the necessity of following them about this country, if they remained within it, as all the proceedings had to be taken within a few days under the Bill. On receipt of the notice, having, as they had, to do with all degrees of lunacy, a lunatic would probably get out of the way, perhaps out of the Kingdom, or he might leave the world altogether. There was one well-known case of a man of an eminent name who had been found a lunatic by inquisition, and who was now living abroad. He had received and would read to their Lordships a letter from an eminent medical practitioner stating that he had never known so many suicides of alleged lunatics as had occurred within the last two years; and the writer believed that

suicides were committed not so much from the apprehension of the legal consequences of being declared lunatics as from the fear of publicity. The interview required by the Bill would virtually be nothing else than a trial of lunacy of the person. Most of these cases would have been curable had they been dealt with in time—so, at least, said the letter he referred to. A great deal of expense and trouble would be caused under the Bill, which need not be incurred if the justice or judge were allowed to exercise his discretion, without listening to the demand of the lunatic whether he should see him or not.

Amendment *moved*, in page 4, to leave out Sub-sections 9, 10, and 11.—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he held that Sub-sections 9 and 10 of the Bill were a total departure from the spirit of the Bills introduced by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) last year, and by himself (the Earl of Selborne) the year before. They had given careful consideration to the question; and to him it appeared that if the Sub-sections 9 and 10 stood, they would be prejudicial to the main object of the Lunacy Laws, which were for the benefit of those persons who required to be taken care of, and in which respect alone these laws were useful. The main object of such a law was the prompt placing under care and supervision of a patient really lunatic, before he could do harm to himself or anyone else. To proceed in the case of such a person as if he were accused of a crime, and to put him upon his defence, would be a departure from the whole principle of the law and practice of lunacy. It was assumed—the fact was, unhappily, too certain—that there were a number of persons who, unfortunately, required to be taken care of in their own interests and those of society, and that assumption required that they should be promptly dealt with, and without unnecessary delay. He entirely agreed that every reasonable security should be taken against any abuse of the law; but it should be remembered that many cases were curable; that if patients were treated promptly they could often soon be restored to their friends; but that in such cases all might, and often did, depend upon promptness of treatment. The clause

as it stood, in fact, would tend to defeat that object, and might compel the use of urgency orders in almost all cases; for it absolutely gave the lunatic the opportunity of taking vengeance upon those who sought to place him under restraint if he should so wish; or, if his tendency were suicidal, to do harm to himself; and, in all cases in which he was not so mad as to be unable to read and understand the notice, to remove himself out of the way, and so defeat it. He sincerely hoped their Lordships would agree to the Amendment.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he so entirely sympathized with the object of his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor in the desire to create every possible safeguard against putting under restraint people who ought not to be under restraint, that he assured him he approached the proposed alteration with every desire to support it if he could. But he could not support it. It was highly important that a sane person should not be put under restraint; but it was also important that restraint should be applied to those whom it was necessary and beneficial to restrain. They had to steer between those two dangers. The latter, to his mind, was a very real danger. There were, however, many cases which were undoubtedly curable, if the patient was at once removed from his surroundings and promptly treated. To impose delay in such cases might be to condemn to perpetual lunacy. It was essential that a safeguard should be created against such a danger. The very serving, too, of a notice upon a lunatic might, as had been pointed out, cause him to put an end to his life. Again, some lunatics, with an undoubtedly dangerous mania, might be clever enough to conceal their lunacy, when they were informed that a certain person was to see them. Were they justified in running such risks for the chance of a greater safeguard in requiring a magistrate to see the alleged lunatic? He doubted, moreover, whether a magistrate would be willing to undertake the duty of seeing every lunatic, when the documents he received might satisfy him of the lunacy of the man. A magistrate was to be bound to see the alleged lunatic, unless an emergency order had been issued, or it might be to the prejudice of the lunatic or

Lord Grimthorpe

dangerous to the public. He did not know whether the magistrate was to regard himself as one of the public; but he supposed that he might. He was anxious to secure persons against abuse of the law of restraint; but he was afraid that the sub-section might cause danger in another direction. Therefore, he was not easy as to running the risks pointed out by his noble and learned Friend, for those perils far outweighed the advantages of greater security which the present sub-sections provided.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he could not help thinking that a good deal had been mixed up and introduced into the discussion which was not strictly associated with it. Their Lordships knew the history of the Bill, for all who had charge of Bills of this kind had been struck with the necessity there was for them to resist the desire of the Medical Profession to have the certifying of lunatics entirely in their own hands. Even the Lunacy Commissioners deprecated the interference of any judicial authority in these matters. His noble and learned Friends and himself had had occasion to see that they must resist that desire of medical men; and the question arose in what form judicial authority should be introduced with the least annoyance or danger to the lunatic? If the principle of the Bill—judicial intervention, as he took it—was admitted, he would undertake to alter the form of the clause so as to meet, as far as possible, the chief objections which had been raised. What he desired was that every person accused of lunacy should, if he wished, have the right to demand that he should be brought before a judicial tribunal. It would be extremely easy to mould the clause so as to provide that, within a certain time, say 24 or 48 hours after he had been taken care of under a medical certificate, a lunatic should have served upon him a notice enabling him, if he wished, to be brought before a magistrate. As he had said, if that principle were conceded, he was ready to mould the machinery of the clause so as to meet the views of noble and learned Lords; and he did not think it would operate prejudicially, either to the lunatic or to the public. He did not see how the principle could operate to the prejudice of the lunatic, or how an investigation before a magistrate could be more in-

jurious to the lunatic than the examination which medical men were supposed—he used the word deliberately—to make before signing a certificate for his removal; and he could not understand why a magistrate should not be as competent to decide the question with as judicial a mind as a medical man. The magistrate would be quite efficient, and would determine the question, not solely by his own view, or his power of detecting mental disease, but in the ordinary way in which he determined any matter which came before him in his judicial capacity upon evidence, and could do so with a judicial mind unpoisoned by information received from other persons. For himself, he thought an alleged lunatic should have an absolute right to demand, if he wished it, to be brought before a magistrate before his liberty was taken away from him.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he understood the present suggestion of the noble and learned Lord to be that when a person was actually under care as a lunatic, he should have such information given him personally as that, if he desired it, he might be brought before a justice or magistrate for examination. He (the Earl of Selborne) must guard himself from expressing an opinion at that moment one way or other as to that proposition, though he was quite ready to consider it when reduced to a definite shape; but he would point out that it was entirely different from that contained in the 9th sub-section of the clause, and it was, he thought, a matter requiring further consideration. It was obvious that if the lunatic were already in care when he came before the magistrate, some of the objections to the sub-sections, as they now stood, would be removed.

LORD HERSCHELL said, it also appeared to him that it was difficult to form an opinion on the suggested alteration of the clause without seeing its exact terms.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: In that case, my Lords, I am perfectly willing to postpone the clause in order that my proposition may be considered by noble and learned Lords.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn*.

Clause *postponed*.

Clause 4 (Urgency orders).

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in moving, as an Amendment, to omit the words "one clear day," said, he did so because they had no legal definition of that term, and he would rather call it, as it stood, "one obscure day." He proposed instead to insert the words "not later than the following day."

Amendment *moved*, in Sub-section 10, page 8, line 10, to leave out ("within one clear") and insert ("not later than the following.") — (*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

Amendment *negatived*.

Clause *agreed to*, with verbal Amendments.

Clause 5 (Protection to persons signing orders and certificates) *agreed to*.

Clause 6 (Lunatics not under proper control or care and cruelly treated or neglected).

On the Motion of The Lord MONKS-WELL, the following Amendments made:—In Sub-section 7, page 9, line 13, after ("shall") insert ("either himself visit and examine the alleged lunatic or"); and in line 15 leave out ("justice") and insert ("he").

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*.

Clauses 7 to 32, inclusive, *agreed to*.

Clause 33 (Maintenance for pauper lunatics taken charge of by relatives).

On the Motion of The Lord MONKS-WELL, the following Amendment made:—

In sub-section (5), page 25, add at the end of the sub-section:—"and the allowance made by the guardians or treasurer under this clause shall for all purposes of recoupment to such guardians or treasurer be deemed to be moneys paid for the maintenance of the lunatic in the asylum from which he has been removed").

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*.

Clauses 34 to 39, inclusive, *agreed to*.

On the Motion of The Lord CHANCELLOR, the following Amendments made:—After Clause 39 insert as new Clauses A. and B.—

CLAUSE A.

(Lord Chancellor may supersede inquisition and rescind or vary order for commitment of person.)

"A. (1.) If in any case of a person who has been found lunatic by inquisition the Lord Chancellor or Judge in Lunacy, being satisfied on the report of the Commissioners or of one of the Lord Chancellor's Visitors in Lunacy, or on any other evidence that the lunatic is cured, or that he is capable of managing himself, and not dan-

gerous to himself or others, though incapable of managing his affairs, may, if he shall think it desirable that the ordinary proceedings for a supersedeas should not be insisted on, by order supersede the inquisition so far as the same finds that the lunatic is incapable of managing himself, and rescind or vary any order for the commitment of the person of the lunatic.

"(2.) An order under this section may be made on such terms and conditions as the Lord Chancellor or Judge in Lunacy may think fit.

"(3.) Notice of an order under this section shall be forthwith given to the committee of the lunatic and also to the person under whose care the lunatic is.

CLAUSE B.

(Order for custody of person of lunatic so found to determine unless continued.)

"B. (1.) The medical attendant of every lunatic so found by inquisition shall, before the expiration of one, three, and six years respectively from the commencement of this Act, and before the expiration of every subsequent period of five years after the expiration of six years from the commencement of this Act, send to the Masters in Lunacy a report as to the mental and bodily condition of the patient, with a certificate under his hand certifying that the patient is still of unsound mind and a proper person to be detained under care and treatment.

"(2.) If, before the expiration of any of the periods herein-before mentioned, such report and certificate is not sent to the Masters, the order for the commitment of the person of the lunatic as to whom such report and certificate is not sent shall determine at the expiration of such period; but nothing herein contained shall affect the commitment of the estate.

"(3.) A Master in Lunacy may, by order under his hand, extend the time within which any report and certificate under this section is to be sent to the Masters, and if the time is so extended, the order for commitment of the person of the lunatic as to whom the time is so extended shall continue in force until the expiration of the extended time, but such extended time shall not exceed six calendar months.

"(4.) Where any order for commitment of the person of a lunatic has determined under this section, the Masters in Lunacy shall forthwith give notice of such determination to the committee of the person of the lunatic and to the person under whose care the lunatic is."

Clauses 40 and 41 severally *agreed to*.

Clauses 42 (Restrictions on new licences).

Amendment *moved*, to insert the following sub-section after Sub-section 3:—

"If there be joint licensees who desire to carry on business apart from one another, and if, in the opinion of the commissioners or of the justices as the case may be, the establishment conducted by them jointly, and also any new establishment which any of them desires to conduct, answers the conditions herein-before required for granting renewed licenses, the commissioners or justices, as the case may be, may grant to each of such licensees renewed licenses for such number of patients (not exceeding in

the aggregate the number allowed by the joint license) as such joint licensees shall agree."—
(*The Lord Monkswell.*)

LORD HALSBURY said, he saw no objection to the insertion of the sub-section.

The EARL OF SELBORNE said, that he had turned this matter over in his mind since last year; and, on the understanding that the application of the sub section was not meant to be confined to cases in existence at the time of the passing of the Act, he was not disposed to make any objection to it.

Amendment agreed to ; words inserted.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 43 to 50, inclusive, agreed to.

After Clause 50,

On the Motion of The Lord MONKS-
WELL, the following New Clause was
agreed to, and added to the Bill :—

"When any officer is transferred from one county asylum to another county asylum in the same county, his service in all such asylums shall be counted for the purpose of computing his pension, superannuation allowance, or gratuity for length of service, as if all such asylums had constituted only one asylum."

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Schedules amended, and agreed to.

House resumed, and to be again in
Committee on *Monday* next.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)— THE IRISH JURY LAWS.

QUESTION.

In reply to Earl CADOGAN,

LORD FITZGERALD said, the question with regard to the Irish Jury Laws was very important, and its early discussion was most desirable. He had, however, received a letter from his noble and learned Friend (Lord Ashbourne), asking him (Lord Fitzgerald) to postpone his Motion on the subject; and, as it would be discourteous to the noble and learned Lord if he were not to comply with his request, he would postpone proceeding with the question from to-morrow till Monday or Tuesday next.

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till
To morrow, a quarter past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 21st February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBER SWORN—John Slagg, esquire, for Burnley.

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—
Great Eastern Railway.

PUBLIC BILL—*Withdrawn*—Municipal Corporations Acts (Ireland) Amendment* [73].

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—*Report*—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* [127].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Colonel Makins.*)

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton):
Sir, in rising to oppose the second reading of this Bill, it is not necessary that I should detain the House very long. I object, in particular, to Clauses 34, 36, and 37 of the Bill, and also to the 1st Schedule, which propose to confer on the Great Eastern Railway Company entirely new powers as to establishing markets and levying tolls—powers which, as far as I am aware, have never previously been conferred upon any Railway Company. I have, however, been in communication with the promoters of the Bill, and I am prepared to assent to the second reading of the Bill on the understanding that I am not prejudiced in raising hereafter an objection to these clauses, and that I shall not be considered to have foregone my right to raise that opposition at any subsequent stage of the Bill. On the understanding that that is so, I will merely say that the clauses in question involve certain questions which are included in the Motion of which I have given Notice in reference to tolls and markets. That Motion has not been specially directed against this Bill; and I am told that the Company have had to encounter very great difficulties in their endeavour to resist the privilege of restraining sales claimed under the Charter I really attack. I do not, therefore, propose to move the Motion for the rejection of the Bill which I have placed on the Paper.

MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): Sir, I hope the House will bear with me for a moment while I say a word in regard to this Bill. It is a measure which directly affects the constituency I have the honour to represent. Clause 36 confers on the Great Eastern Railway Company power to carry on the Stratford Market. That market is of the utmost importance to the population of West Ham; and they object altogether to the powers which the Great Eastern Company propose to acquire. They are of opinion that the market tolls should be collected by the Corporation, and expended by them for the benefit of the ratepayers. It is well known that the Great Eastern Company have, by an agreement which is mentioned in Clause 34 of the Bill, undertaken to carry out certain objects in connection with Horner's Estate and Stratford Market, which it is believed will interfere prejudicially with the amount of produce taken into the market, and detrimentally affect the interests of the population. Seeing that the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of West Ham have lodged a Petition against the Bill, I do not feel justified in pressing my opposition to the Market Clauses of the Bill to a Division in the present stage of the measure; but at the same time I reserve to myself full right to take any course I may think it desirable to pursue if the Bill should be returned to the House in the form it assumes now.

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster): I do not think it would be right for me to oppose the Bill on general grounds; because I am petitioning against it on private grounds; and I know very well that a prejudice exists in this House against anyone who has petitioned against a Bill being heard in opposition to it on public grounds. But, speaking from large experience in connection with the market supply of East London, I hope I may be permitted to say that this Bill will strengthen, enlarge, and confirm, by the authority of this House, the monopoly which has hitherto existed in the hands of the Spitalfields Market. Upon that ground, I consider that the clauses of the Bill are highly detrimental to the interests of the poor in the East End of London. I do not propose to pursue my opposition to the Bill further at this stage, on the ground I have already

stated—namely, that I am one of the Petitioners against it, and that I shall have an opportunity of being heard elsewhere; but I reserve to myself the right to oppose the Bill at a future stage.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): As the Bill affects my constituency also, I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that I offer no opposition to the second reading, on the understanding indicated by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) that it will not prevent further opposition to the measure at a subsequent stage.

COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.E.): I perfectly understand the view which has been put forward by hon. Members who have spoken upon the Bill. It is right, however, the House should know that this Bill is a measure which contains many other provisions besides the market provisions—provisions that are necessary for the carrying on of the service of the Great Eastern Railway Company, and for ensuring the safety of the public. With regard to the Market Clauses, the Company are quite prepared to adopt the view which has been put forward by hon. Members who have addressed the House. They do not seek to acquire these markets in any restrictive sense whatever. The position of the Company is simply this—A restrictive right did exist when the Company bought up the property. They have resisted that right as far as they could, and they have carried the case to the highest tribunal—the House of Lords; and, as the House of Lords have decided against them, they have been compelled to make an application to Parliament, in order to render these markets more effective, and to make better provision for a large and rapidly growing population. That being the case, I am quite prepared, on behalf of the promoters, to guarantee that neither the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), nor the hon. and learned Member for West Ham (Mr. Forrest Fulton), nor any other objector to the Bill, shall be in a worse position in consequence of the second reading of the Bill. It is the desire of the Railway Company that there should be more markets, rather than fewer, and they would be very glad to see the markets in West Ham considerably multiplied. I do not think that any public right or authority will be injured by reading the

Bill a second time, and I trust that after what I have said there will be no further opposition to the measure at this stage.

MAJOR BANES (West Ham, S.): On the part of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of West Ham, I was prepared to oppose the second reading of the Bill, so far as the clauses relating to the market rights are concerned. My constituents feel that, having been lately made a Parliamentary and municipal borough, it is scarcely proper that they should consent to the Common Law right of holding a market, which one man at present claims to possess, being converted into a statutory right, which is sought under cover of this Bill. The lessee claims, through the right of holding a market in Spitalfields under an old Charter, the right over West Ham; but we maintain that in a great and rapidly increasing borough, such as West Ham, with a population of more than 200,000, possessing now Parliamentary Representatives and a Mayor and Corporation, we should not permit ourselves to be deprived of our market rights. But, under the circumstances which have been mentioned, I am quite willing to assent to the arrangement which has been made with the hon. and gallant Member for Walthamstow (Colonel Makins), and to agree to the second reading of the Bill, on the understanding that, by consenting to that course, our right to oppose these clauses at a subsequent stage will not be prejudiced.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I also, while allowing the second reading of the Bill to pass, reserve to myself the right of opposing it, if necessary, on a future occasion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

AMBLESIDE RAILWAY BILL.

INSTRUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Ambleside Railway Bill, to inquire and report whether the proposed Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public, who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I am anxious to meet my hon. Friend half-way; but it seems to me that the terms of his Instruction involve the recognition of the principle against which we contended the other day, against which we divided, and against which the House has already pronounced a clear and decided opinion—namely, that it is not for the House to decide whether a railway is to spoil the scenery of a particular district; but that the construction of a railway is to depend upon whether the interests of the inhabitants demand that it should be made. The last words of this Instruction are—

"By injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject."

"Evidence upon the subject" means any evidence that may be procurable in regard to the beauties of the scenery of Westmoreland and Cumberland; and we should have hundreds of aesthetes and all sorts of gentlemen, one after another, going before the Committee and wasting their time upon matters in which I do not think it is right they should move. Under these circumstances, I propose to move as an Amendment, to the Instruction of my hon. Friend, to leave out the words after the word "whether" in line 2, and to insert—

"The scenery in the neighbourhood will be injuriously affected, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive local Evidence on the subject."

By the words "local Evidence," the Committee to whom the Bill will be referred will perfectly understand that what is meant is the residents in the neighbourhood. As a matter of fact, I believe that Mr. Ruskin, who takes the strongest views of these railways, does live close by, and he would be included in the word local, if he ventures to give evidence. I beg to move this Amendment.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "whether" to the end of the Question, in order to insert the words "the scenery in the neighbourhood will be injuriously affected or otherwise, and that the Committee have power to receive local Evidence upon the subject."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed; "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think I have some reason to complain of the conduct of my hon. Friend and those who support him in moving this Amendment. They have done so without any Notice whatever to me, or to any other hon. Member who is opposed to this Bill, until five minutes ago, when I entered the House. The hon. Member has, in the meantime, had an opportunity of bringing up his Friends, which we have not.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will my hon. Friend allow me, for one moment, to say that I have done nothing of the sort? I consulted with my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) a few minutes ago, and he was aware that it was coming on.

MR. BRYCE: Be that as it may, this Amendment has been sprung upon me, and those who have acted with me in opposing the Bill. If the hon. Member intended to move an Amendment of this kind, he ought, in common courtesy, to have given some Notice of his intention. As I gave full Notice of my intention to propose the Instruction, I think I have good cause to complain, especially in a matter of this kind, the interest taken in which was shown by the large Division which occurred the other day. The second reading was only carried by a narrow majority, and hon. Members have received no Notice whatever that it was intended to propose an Amendment of this kind. The House will remember what passed the other day. After I had moved the rejection of the Bill, the hon. Member for Mid Cumberland (Mr. J. W. Lowther) rose to support the Bill, and, without any suggestion from me he recommended that an Instruction to the Committee should be moved, and asked why I had not moved an Instruction such as that which I moved a few years ago in the case of the Ennerdale Railway Bill. The hon. Member added—"We will accept such an Instruction, and an opportunity will be afforded, in that way, of raising before the Committee the question of the injury to the scenery which you desire to raise." I am far from thinking that an Instruction of that kind is a sufficient or adequate method of raising the question. I submit that a Committee upstairs is not the proper tribunal for dealing with it; but, nevertheless, when that offer was made by the hon. Member, and made in most

general terms, because the hon. Member said that it should be some such Instruction as I had moved in the case of the Ennerdale Bill, I considered it my duty, as soon as the second reading was carried, to accept the offer. Accordingly, I put down an Instruction in exactly the same terms as the Instruction which was adopted in the case of the Ennerdale Bill. Then, I think it rather hard, after having made that offer, that the hon. Member should come down to this House, and, without any Notice to me, proceed to oppose it. That is not the way in which the Business of this House has hitherto been conducted. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] I repeat it. An offer was made to the House, on the faith of that offer the House went to a Division, and, the Bill having been read a second time, I proceeded to act upon the offer of the hon. Gentleman and those who support the Bill, and now they come down to oppose the Instruction I have moved. I think these facts ought to be quite sufficient to induce the House to support the Instruction in its present form. Hon. Members will hardly, I imagine, give their assent to the doctrine that, after a suggestion has been made in the hearing of the House, it is to be deliberately rejected by those who made it. Perhaps I may be allowed to say, further, that I have an objection on principle to the Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend. The Amendment is intended to negative the principle which has been frequently adopted by this House—that there are other persons interested in the preservation of scenery as well as the inhabitants of the particular locality affected—namely, the people generally. That is a principle which we cannot consent to abandon, and it is the principle which lies at the root of this matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton says that the evidence tendered might be very long. Let me tell him what happened in the case of the Committee on the Ennerdale Bill. When they received the Instruction of this House the Committee intimated their readiness to receive evidence; but the only evidence tendered on the question of scenery was that of two three witnesses—at the outside not more than four—and all the evidence these witnesses gave was over in the course of little more than an

hour. The idea, therefore, that the time of the Committee would be unduly taken up is utterly groundless. With these few words, I will ask the House to do what it did in the case of the Ennerdale Bill—namely, to pass the Instruction in the terms in which I have moved it.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the House will allow me to say a few words respecting this Bill; I do so, not as a stranger, but as one well acquainted with the district. Some years ago the Manchester Corporation obtained power to construct works in their district for supplying the City of Manchester with water; but the whole of their conduits and operations were required to be carried on along the hill-side at considerable expense, instead of being constructed in the usual manner, in order to preserve, as far as possible, the scenery of this unique district. The hon. Member in charge of this Instruction mentioned, in the course of his speech on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill, that this is almost the most beautiful district in England. I wish my right hon. Friend the late Member for Bradford (Mr. Forster) was here to-day; because I have heard him express, on more occasions than one—and he passed his autumns in this neighbourhood—an opinion that the Lake District was not only among the most beautiful in England, but that it was—and he spoke deliberately—the most beautiful in the world. During a long life, much of which was passed in travelling, Mr. Forster spent most of his autumns in the Lake Country. He was a resident in the neighbourhood, and that is the opinion at which he arrived. As regards what fell from the hon. Member for Northampton in defence of the rights of property, I admit that those rights are entitled to the fullest consideration; but I hope the hon. Member will permit me to remind him that that principle of protecting the rights of the public to enjoy beautiful districts has been raised in the House of Commons time after time, and has never been rejected—*[Cries of "Oh!"]* Hon. Gentlemen have not heard the conclusion of my sentence. I was proceeding to say that in cases where railway schemes have been projected to cross commons and to injure beautiful scenery this House has, on many occasions, either rejected the

Bill altogether, or allowed it to pass under such restrictions that the scenery has not been injured, and the rights of the public to the full enjoyment of it have been preserved. This district is frequented year after year by those who live in the centre of the manufacturing districts. It is their recreation ground, and their holiday place. I find that, in the late Division, hon. Members who represent the working classes voted against the second reading of the Bill. I represent a working class district, and I think I am only doing my duty in respectfully asking the House to accept this Instruction, and protect this neighbourhood. The object of a visit to the Lakes is not to hurry through the district by an express train, but to be deposited at some convenient place, and then to enjoy the beauty of the neighbourhood. Ambleside is situated in the very centre of the Lake District, and it is not true to say that the scenery begins to open out at this point. On the contrary, the construction of the projected railway will inflict great injury upon the scenery if it is permitted to pass. I am sorry to interpose in the discussion of a private Bill; but, as I take a warm interest in the neighbourhood, because I know it, I hope the House will not accuse me of having unduly occupied their time. I beg to support the Instruction as originally proposed.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The remarks of the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Powell) show very clearly that he has not altogether appreciated the point under discussion at the present moment. He seems to be under the impression that if the House accepts the Instruction of the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) it will succeed in putting an end to the Ambleside Railway Bill. [MR. F. S. POWELL: I never said so.] I know the hon. Member never said so; but that is a fair construction to put upon the remarks which have just fallen from him. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Aberdeen has brought forward this Instruction with that particular view, and in that way he seeks to reverse the decision the House came to on Thursday last. The hon. Member for Aberdeen went out of his way to make an unprovoked, unnecessary, and unusual attack upon myself. He accused me of a breach of faith. Now, what are the exact facts

of the case? When I spoke in this House last Thursday, I said the proper course for the hon. Member to take was to withdraw his opposition to the second reading of the Bill; and I added that if he would do that I would have no objection to an Instruction being given to the Committee to whom the Bill would be referred. But did the hon. Member do so? Not in the least. The hon. Member pressed his Motion to a Division, and he was defeated. Now, Sir, if the hon. Member had withdrawn his opposition, and had then brought forward this Instruction, he might have complained of my conduct if I had opposed him. I oppose this Instruction in the interests of the local inhabitants of the district. I said last Thursday—and I repeat it again to-day—that this Bill is a local Bill, promoted by the inhabitants of the district, and that when it comes to a competition between the local inhabitants of Ambleside and the district and the Commons' Preservation Society in the Gallery upstairs, of course it is in the power of hon. Members opposite, who belong to that Society, to make the proceedings extremely protracted, and the guineas of the hon. Member and his Friends must eventually overcome the half-crowns of the working men of Ambleside and the district. I say that the form in which the hon. Member for Northampton wishes this Instruction to leave this House is a far more reasonable and fair one, because it allows all the inhabitants of the district, and those most affected by the construction of the railway, to give evidence before the Committee as to whether or no it will spoil the scenery; and surely those who are inhabitants of the district the whole year round are in a better position to state their views as to whether the scenery will be affected or not than those whom I spoke of recently as "trippers," who just go into the district for a very few hours. The Instruction which the hon. Member has moved would permit of a large number of witnesses being called, beginning with Sir Frederick Leighton, and ending with the hon. Member for North-west Lanarkshire (Mr. Cunningham Graham). I maintain that it would be improper to impose such a burden upon the promoters of the Bill, and for these reasons I shall support the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Northampton.

Mr. J. W. Lowther

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): I hope the House will not accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. That Amendment provides that the Committee shall only receive local evidence on the question. I do not know what "local" would be in the view of the Committee. I represent a constituency in the North East of England, and an immense number of excursion trains start annually from the Tyne and the North Eastern Counties for the purpose of excursion trips to the neighbourhood of the Lakes. It is well known in my neighbourhood how the beauty of a neighbourhood is blemished and mutilated by railroads, and the people are only too glad to take advantage of resorting to the Lake District for recreation, and they have no desire to be exposed to the disadvantages which have been pointed out. I know the hon. Gentleman who spoke last would be the last person in the world to take an improper advantage in forcing on a debate. Now, there was certainly left upon my mind, and also on the minds of other hon. Members last Thursday, the distinct impression that an Instruction of this sort to the Committee upon the Bill would be submitted. I am sure there will be no wish to call the President of the Royal Academy or Mr. Ruskin; but the desire is to enable those to be heard who will otherwise have no *locus standi*, and who may be said to represent the general interests of the public. As the House has hardly had time to consider the matter, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 "That the Debate be now adjourned."
(Mr. W. H. James.)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I rise to express a hope that the debate will not be allowed to proceed further; and that the proposal to adjourn it will be acceded to. My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has stated that the Amendment has been sprung upon him as a complete surprise. I presume there has been a misunderstanding, and it is desirable; if any engagement has been made in good faith, that no steps should be taken to give colour for the statement that there has been a surprise. If it is desired to amend the Instruction, it is a matter which ought to be duly considered, so

that the principle which is to guide the Committee may be clearly ascertained and settled. In order that the whole matter may be fairly considered, I hope that the House, without further debate, will agree to the Motion for Adjournment.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): After the observations of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, I desire to confirm the statement which has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther). My hon. Friend says that he made an offer to the hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), that if he would not oppose the second reading of the Bill, and would move an Instruction to the Committee, such Instruction would be accepted. But that offer was not accepted by the hon. Member for Aberdeen. If there is any ground for complaint at all, it should come from this side of the House, and not from that. The hon. Member seemed to treat the matter as if it were of little gravity. Now, I think it is one of great gravity, and the hon. Member ought to have risen in his place, and said that he intended to move an Instruction. He talks of a surprise. All I can say is that I never knew of his intention to move this Instruction until I saw the Instruction itself in the Votes on Saturday, and probably my attention would not have been called to it then but for a letter I had received on the subject. Under these circumstances, I see no ground whatever why the debate should be adjourned, especially when we know that the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, who has just spoken, addressed the House also on Thursday, and supported the second reading of the Bill. Whatever course my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith proposes to take I am prepared to support.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Debate adjourned until *Thursday*.

QUESTIONS.

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LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—DURRUS PETTY SESSIONS— HEGARTY.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a smith

named Hegarty, who resides at Dummannus, county Cork, and who has police protection, has been arrested by his escort on a charge of drunkenness; if Hegarty was subsequently summoned to the Durrus Petty Sessions on the same charge; and, whether the magistrates of the Durrus Petty Sessions dismissed the charge of drunkenness against Hegarty, though the policeman, who was also arrested, was fined 30s. by the Police authorities on the charge of drunkenness, supported by the same testimony?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Hegarty was not arrested by his escort, but was summoned on a charge of drunkenness. The evidence was conflicting, and the magistrates appear to have given him the benefit of the doubt. The constable who was charged with drunkenness admitted his offence against discipline, and was punished accordingly.

ASYLUMS (IRELAND)—MONAGHAN ASYLUM.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the alterations in the construction of the buildings of the Monaghan Asylum, recommended by the architect of the Commissioners of Asylums in Ireland, after his inspection in 1883, as necessary for the safety and comfort of the inmates, have yet been carried out; whether the sanitary arrangements of the institution have been complained of frequently and recently by the Local Board, and also by the resident medical officer, as dangerous to the health of the inmates; and, whether he will cause all necessary alterations to be proceeded with at once?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The carrying out of the additions recommended in 1883 was suspended for some time during the consideration of the general question which was involved—namely, as to whether such additions could not be avoided by utilizing vacant accommodation in some of the Workhouses of the district? The Board of Control report that when that was decided no time was lost in getting the work taken in hand. The Board have received no complaints as to defects in the sanitary arrangements; but the Board's architect has been consulted on

the subject, and has made some recommendations. The alterations in the Asylum are nearly complete.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—EVICITION OF MRS. CONLON, CO. ROSCOMMON.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) (for Mr. O'KELLY) (Roscommon, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a force of Constabulary, under the command of Inspector Walsh, of Stokestown, attended at the eviction of Mrs. Conlon, in the townland of Cloonsrun, near Stokestown, county Roscommon, on the 10th of February; whether, on the refusal of Mrs. Conlon and their daughter to leave their house, Inspector Walsh ordered some of his men to remove them by force; whether Miss Conlon was dragged into the road by force; whether one of the sergeants dragged her by the hair of the head, and threw her on the ground, and knelt on her chest; whether the Constabulary and bailiffs then carried out Mrs. Conlon, who was sick and bedridden, and left her on the roadside; whether Mrs. Conlon had paid her rent to Captain Norton, the landlord, up to 1st May 1886 for the holding from which she was evicted illegally; whether the decree of eviction on which the police acted referred to a second small holding held by Mrs. Conlon; and, whether he will order an investigation into the alleged conduct of Inspector Walsh and the Constabulary on the occasion in question?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The police were present at this eviction, and were obliged to remove Mrs. Conlon from the house, as she became very violent and attempted to assault the bailiff with a pair of tongs; but no such violence was used as is stated in the fourth paragraph of the Question. Mrs. Conlon, who was in bed but fully dressed in her usual day clothing, declined to leave, and was removed very carefully by the Sheriff's bailiff and the representative of the landlord, the police in nowise assisting. She and her daughter were immediately re-admitted as caretakers. I have no knowledge as to what payments may have been made by Mrs. Conlon. The writ executed was for three and a-half years' rent. There does not appear to have been anything in the action of the police calling for investigation.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach

MR. COX: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Government have taken any action in reference to the conduct of the Sheriff in this case in evicting Mrs. Conlon out of a holding in regard to which he held no writ?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have already informed the hon. Gentleman that it is not a case for the interference of the Government. If Mrs. Conlon was illegally evicted, she has her remedy at law.

ARMY—EXAMINATIONS FOR COMMISSIONS—THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether English literature is excluded from the educational programme of the candidates for commissions in the English Army, while the study of French and German literature is obligatory on those who seek commissions in the French and German Armies respectively; and, if so, whether he will consider the desirability of instituting such a course of study as would enable officers in Her Majesty's Service to become acquainted with the literature of the United Kingdom?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): After very careful consideration, the examination for entrance into the Royal Military College was changed in 1885 by substituting papers on English history generally, with exact and detailed knowledge of a specified period and an essay on a given subject, for an examination in certain Old English writers, such as Chaucer, Bacon, &c. It was found that the latter tended to encourage an unsatisfactory system of cramming.

PARLIAMENTARY REGISTRATION ACT, 1878—CASE OF HENRY HOLDER, REGISTRATION AGENT AT STAFFORD.

MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention had been called to the case of Henry Holder, Conservative Registration Agent at Stafford, who was tried at the Stafford Autumn Assizes, when it was proved and admitted that he had deliberately signed a declaration that a lodger claim was correct, and that he had witnessed the claimant's signature, the claim being actually false, and having been signed in Mr. Holder's own office, and in his presence, by a third party, in the

absence of the claimant, the proceeding being a violation of section 25 of "The Parliamentary Registration Act, 1878;" whether the learned Judge who tried the case directed an acquittal, on the ground that it was not sufficient to prove that the defendant had made a statutory declaration which was false in fact unless it was proved that the declaration was "falsely and fraudulently made;" whether a similar ruling was given in another case tried on 13th November last at the Yorkshire Assizes by Mr. Justice Hawkins; and, whether, having regard to the fact that these rulings render it now impossible to procure a conviction for offences under the lodgers' clauses of the Act of 1878, he will propose such an amendment of the Law as shall put an effectual stop to the practices which the Act of 1878 prohibits, and which those prosecutions were intended to punish?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): My attention has not been called to the prosecutions referred to by the hon. Member, and I have had no opportunity of seeing any reports of the cases, or of ascertaining what directions were given by the learned Judge referred to, or upon what evidence those directions were based. The words of the statute appear to me to have been very carefully framed, and I do not at present see that any amendment is required.

IRELAND — CASHEL TOWN COMMISSIONERS—AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS.

MR. CONDON (Tipperary, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Local Government Board charge the Town Commissioners of Cashel £12 annually for auditing their accounts; whether the Town Commissioners remonstrated with the Board, stating the charge to be excessive, as the work can be done in one and a-half days; whether the Board make a profit out of the transaction; and, whether he will inquire into the matter, with the view to lessening this charge?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Local Government Board report that the amount charged for the audit of the Cashel accounts is correctly stated. The Board have not received any recent remonstrance from the Commissioners

on the subject. The salaries of the auditors are proportionately assessed from time to time by the Local Government Board under the provisions of the statute. The Board are now engaged in revising the assessments over Ireland, and care will be taken to deal fairly with Cashel.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENTS—CO. WESTMEATH.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether on the estate of Captain Dawson, at Tang, in the County Westmeath, both landlord and tenants have joined to have a fair rent fixed, and originating notices were served on the 19th December, 1885; whether the cases have been tried; and, if not, will he state the cause of the delay? I also beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the tenants of Colonel Magill, near Athlone, in the County Westmeath, served originating notices, on the 3rd December, 1885, to have judicial rents fixed; whether these cases have yet been tried; and, if not, will he state the cause of the delay? I further beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on the estates of Lord Castlemaine, Colonel Cooper, Colonel Grogan, and Mr. Frederick Russell, near Athlone, in the County Westmeath, the tenants served originating notices on the landlords, in December 1885, for the purpose of having judicial rents fixed; whether the cases have yet been tried; and, if not, will he state the cause of the delay?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Land Commissioners report that on the several estates mentioned in these Questions 10 cases in all are pending since December, 1885. They were set down for hearing in the Mullingar list for April last, but were not reached before the sitting was unavoidably adjourned. It is hoped they will all be decided in May, when a Sub-Commission will, it is expected, sit in the County Westmeath.

MR. TUIE (Westmeath, N.): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Captain Dawson mentioned in the first Question is the Captain Dawson who gave 25 per cent

reduction to his tenants under the Plan of Campaign?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do not know.

POLICE (METROPOLIS)—WANDSWORTH POLICE COURT.

MR. OCTAVIUS MORGAN (Battersea) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has further considered the Memorial of the Wandsworth Board of Works of 17th March last, asking that the Police Court now stationed at Wandsworth should be transferred to a more central locality, and in closer proximity to Clapham Junction Railway Station; that in future the magistrate should hold his Court during the whole day instead of, as at present, for a half day, and then at an uncertain hour, which does not allow sufficient time for the proper administration of justice?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; the subject of this Memorial has been engaging my careful consideration, and I have been in communication with the Treasury on the subject. I may say that the Government are agreed that the establishment of a whole day Court at Wandsworth has become necessary; but the question of providing for the increased cost is one of considerable difficulty, and is now engaging the attention of myself and of the Treasury. It is not intended at present to change the site of the Wandsworth Court.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—DULEEK PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on the 1st instant, at Duleek Petty Sessions, upon the hearing of a case in which Mr. Fitzherbert Smith was complainant, his uncles, Colonel Smith and Mr. St. George Smith, sat and adjudicated contrary to statute?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): This case has been referred to the Lord Chancellor, as it is understood that the facts are as stated.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—BOXER MARTINI - HENRY CARTRIDGES AT WOOLWICH.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of

the Ordnance, How many million Boxer Martini-Henry cartridges have been manufactured in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich since 1st January 1885, that date being subsequent to their failure in the Soudan, and to the condemnatory Report made upon them by the General Officer Commanding the Officers in the Field; and how many, if any, subsequent to the official assurance that no more of these cartridges would be made, but that steps would be taken to supply the troops with solid-drawn cartridge cases?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (MR. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The annual consumption of these cartridges required for practice by the Regular and Auxiliary Forces and the Royal Navy is about 45,000,000, and they have been manufactured at a little over that rate since January 1, 1885. I am not aware of any assurance having been given that the rolled metal cartridge would not in future be used for practice.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—CARTRIDGES IN STORE.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, How many solid-drawn cartridge cases are in store at the present moment; when they first began to be manufactured; and what nature of cartridges, and how many, are available at the present time for the troops in the event of a sudden war?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (MR. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The manufacture of solid-drawn cartridges commenced in March, 1885. As regards the remainder of the Question, I must refer the hon. and gallant Member to the reply given on the 9th of September last by my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (MR. W. H. SMITH). I could only repeat his answer; but I may say, generally, that an adequate supply of solid-drawn cartridges are in store.

POOR LAW (IRELAND) — BAILIEBOROUGH BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is the qualification for Poor Law Guardians in the Bailieborough Union, in the County of Cavan, £30; is this the highest qualification required in any Union in Ireland; is the number of holdings in this Union valued at £30

and upwards fewer than in Unions in which the qualification is lower; and will the Local Government Board for Ireland give effect to the Resolution passed by the Bailieborough Board of Guardians on the 14th instant, requesting them to fix the qualification for Guardians in that Union at £20?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Local Government Board report that the facts are as stated in the Question with regard to the qualification for Poor Law Guardians in the Bailieborough Union, which has stood at the present figure for at least 36 years. The Resolution requesting the Local Government Board to fix the qualification at £20 was carried by a very narrow majority, and Notice has been given of a Motion to rescind it. As the election of Guardians will soon take place, the Local Government cannot carry out the proposed alteration this year, but will undertake to consider it carefully next year, and possibly carry it into effect, if the Guardians by a good majority are of opinion that such should be done.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE PRISON SERVICE (ENGLAND).

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether an official nomination is required for the situation of subordinate officer in the Prison Service, England; whether the Civil Service Commissioners have recently stated in writing that the Commissioners can give no information as to the persons from whom, or the means by which, such nominations are to be obtained; and, whether he will state with whom the patronage control, by means of such nominations, of all subordinate situations in the Prison Service rests?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; an official nomination is required. The patronage control of all subordinate situations in the Prison Service rests with the Directors and Commissioners of Prisons, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. As to the Prison Commissioners, this is clearly defined in the 7th and 9th sections of the Prison Act, 1877. The practice is the same with regard to subordinate appointments in the Convict Service. I am informed by the Civil Service Commissioners that it

is not their practice, and they have no authority, to publish any statement as to the method of obtaining nominations in the case of prison or any other appointments.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) —THE PATTERN POST.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he received a deputation from the London Chamber of Commerce in December last; whether he then stated that the present arrangements for the carriage of patterns by post throughout the United Kingdom constitute "not merely an anomaly, but a grave scandal;" and, whether any steps are being taken by his Department to amend the charges and regulations for the conveyance of patterns by post?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I made, on the 17th instant, to a similar Question asked by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor).

EGYPT—LIGHT DUES ON SHIPPING.

MR. T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, If he can state the exact amount received annually by the Egyptian Government in the shape of light dues on shipping, according to the latest Returns; and, at the same time, the cost of maintaining the lights in respect of which such dues are levied?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): According to Returns received at the Board of Trade through the Foreign Office, the amounts of Receipts and Expenditure by the Egyptian Government on account of their Lighthouse Administration for the years 1883, 1884, and 1885 are as follow:—For 1883, receipts, £E8,261; expenditure, £E26,218; for 1884, receipts, £E90,152; expenditure, £E26,349; for 1885, receipts, £E92,204; expenditure, £E28,046.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—EXTRA POLICE—CO. CORK.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that, at the last Summer Assizes, the sum

ordered to be levied off the County of Cork in respect of extra police for the half-year was over £3,400; whether he is aware that, at the same Assizes, the following Resolution was adopted by the County Cork Grand Jury—

"With reference to the Resolution passed at the County at Large Sessions on the subject of the charge for extra police in this county, the Grand Jury are of opinion that the very large amount charged for that subject is, to a great extent, an useless and extravagant expenditure, as it does not lead to the detection of crime.

"The force required may be much smaller, but constituted altogether differently for detective purposes.

"The state of Kerry, our adjoining county, overrun with police, and scarcely a crime detected, affords the strongest proof of the necessity for a change in the direction we have suggested.

"Proposed by J. W. Payne,

"Seconded by John E. Barrett.

"R. U. Penrose Fitzgerald, Foreman."

Whether, in the last quarter; the number of agrarian crimes in that county fell to 14; and, under the circumstances, whether steps will be taken by Government to relieve the taxpayers of the county of the present heavy impost in respect of extra police?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The charge in question was, in round numbers, £3,400; and I also understand that the Resolutions referred to were duly passed at the Summer Assizes. But the necessity for the continuance of the extra force is now greater than it was then, in consequence of the excitement created by attempts to enforce the Plan of Campaign; and I cannot, at present, relieve the taxpayers of the county of this additional cost.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE RIVER SHANNON—FINES ON A CONSERVATOR.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Limerick Board of Conservators have, within the past month, discharged the water bailiffs at all the principal spawning stations on the River Shannon; thereby leaving that valuable river at the mercy of the poachers, at this critical season, when the spawning fish require the most careful attention; and, if so, what steps will be taken for their preservation; whether, at the January Quarter Sessions, held at Kil-

rush, County Clare, the County Court Judge, Mr. Charles Kelly, Q.C., confirmed the decision of the Knock Bench of Magistrates, in the infliction of fines, amounting to £80, on one Mr. Simon M'Cauliff, a member of the Board of Conservators, and an extensive net proprietor on the Lower Shannon, the fines being imposed on him for eight specific breaches of the Fishery Laws in the month of June previous; and, whether the Government will take any steps in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Inspectors of Fisheries have received no Report from the Limerick Board of Conservators as to the dismissal of the bailiffs over the principal spawning station of the River Shannon. The Inspectors, however, have made inquiries, and were informed by the Conservators that the bailiffs had been discharged for economy sake, and the Conservators thought it a good thing to do, as the spawning season is now on. In any case, the Inspectors have no control over the expenditure of the funds of the Conservators.

ARMY—PURCHASE OF ARMY HORSES IN CANADA.

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the case, as stated in a newspaper called *The Canadian Gazette*, that—

"Colonel Goldie, Quarter Master General at Halifax, has been instructed to purchase this year, for the Imperial Authorities, no less than 500 horses, in the various Provinces of the Dominion, and that, in each subsequent year, further purchases will be made;"

And, if so, whether it is because a sufficient number of horses suitable for Army purposes cannot be obtained in the United Kingdom?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Orders have been given for the purchase of some horses in Canada, with the object of developing within Her Majesty's Dominions markets on which it would be possible, in case of mobilization, to draw for at least a portion of the large supply of horses required; but the War Office has every desire to encourage, in every possible way, the supply by home breeders of horses of the stamp required for the Army.

**JURORS' ACTS (IRELAND) — CON-
NAUGHT WINTER ASSIZES — THE
CLERK OF THE CROWN.**

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following incident at the Connaught Winter Assizes held at Sligo, as reported in *The Freeman's Journal*, 21st December, 1886:—

"J. Cochrane Davys, Clerk of the Crown and Peace, was then sworn, and, in reply to Mr. Leamy, stated that he was appointed to the office previous to the Spring Assizes of 1886. For some years previous he had been Assistant Clerk of the Crown.

"Did you mark the panel of the Spring Assizes, 1886?—Yes.

"Did you send that marked panel to the Sub-Sheriff?—No.

"Why?—Because I did not think it my duty to do so.

"Have you read the Jurors' Acts. Surely you, a solicitor, must have read these Acts?—I declare to you I have never read them in my life."

And, whether he will take steps to insure that Crown Officials in Ireland make themselves acquainted with Acts of Parliament relating to their duties?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I am informed by Mr. Davys that the report referred to in the Question is substantially correct. There is no doubt that the Clerk of the Crown and Peace ought to have made himself acquainted with the Acts of Parliament relating to jurors, and I intend to communicate further with him on the subject.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last Question I have put?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have answered it.

**IRISH LAND COMMISSION—ENDOWED
SCHOOLS COMMISSIONERS.**

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a quorum attended the meeting of Commissioners of Endowed Schools, Ireland, on 13th January, 1887; whether J. J. Berrison, the land agent, was in attendance; whether any of the Commissioners who wrote advising an increased abatement of rent to tenants were present; whether the Board has repeatedly refused the admission of any

deputation from the Cavan tenantry; and, whether the Commissioners will now re-consider the matter, and receive a deputation from the tenants at their next meeting?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Commissioners met on the 13th of January; but they declined to give any information on the matters mentioned in the Question. They will consider any matter brought before them, but decline to alter their usual practice by receiving a deputation.

MR. BIGGAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Cavan land agent who refuses to permit more than 10 per cent abatement is the same J. J. Berrison, J.P., against whom the Hon. George Annesley had to proceed by garnishee order for the recovery of the rent of Gerald Gregg, one of Lord Annesley's tenants, which rent Berrison had taken into his hands, refusing to allow Gregg to pay unless allowed 25 per cent abatement.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I object again, Sir, to these charges and insinuations being made without Notice in reference to absent persons.

**EGYPT—SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF'S
MISSION.**

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can state to the House the present position of negotiations in regard to Egypt and the limitations within which Sir Drummond Wolff is acting?

**EGYPT—NEGOTIATIONS AT CON-
STANTINOPLE.**

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is now in a position to give any further information in regard to the negotiations which are proceeding at Constantinople on the subject of Egyptian arrangements?

**EGYPT—PROPOSAL OF SIR H.
DRUMMOND WOLFF.**

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) also had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Will Her Ma-

jesty's Government state what are the proposals recently made at Constantinople by Sir Drummond Wolff to the Ottoman Porte relating to the future Government of Egypt; do such proposals involve a withdrawal of the troops until such a time as a strong Government, capable of holding its own, is established in Egypt; do such proposals involve any abandonment by this Country of the right to control the affairs of Egypt, should a return of the troops ever be necessary; and, do they include conditions involving a neutrality similar to that in force in the case of Belgium?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): Sir, if my hon. Friends the Members for Great Yarmouth and Elgin will permit me, I will reply to their Questions at the same time as that of my hon. Friend the Member for Salford. I hope that my hon. Friends and the House will recognize that it is both inexpedient and contrary to the uniform practice that I should state publicly the precise terms of the proposals which have been made by Her Majesty's Special Commissioner with reference to Egypt. But in view of the considerable anxiety in regard to certain points indicated by the Questions, I am able to say that those proposals do not involve a withdrawal of the troops so long as there is any apprehension that the Government of Egypt is not in a position to maintain itself. Her Majesty's Government have never made any proposal tending to renounce their right to protect the tranquillity of Egypt from external or internal disturbances; and there is no foundation for the impression that Her Majesty's Government look upon the position which was assigned by Treaty to Belgium as a precedent which it is desirable to follow in the arrangements which shall be made for Egypt. Her Majesty's Government are well aware of the different circumstances in which Belgium and Egypt stand.

CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM (IRELAND)—OCCUPATION BY THE POLICE.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the hospital of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum has until recently been occupied by a body of 12 police constables and a sergeant; if he can state under what cir-

cumstances and at whose instance they were sent to the asylum; under what circumstances and at whose instance they have been removed; and what was the cost of this force of police during the 23 months of their residence in the asylum?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): A police force has been placed for some years past in the Criminal Lunatic Asylum to prevent the escape of patients while alterations were being made in the asylum, and these alterations having been completed the force has been withdrawn.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—WESTPORT UNION, COUNTY MAYO.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called, by the Board of Guardians of the Westport Union, County Mayo, to certain impending evictions, chiefly by Lord Sligo and Colonel Clive, of 121 families, numbering about 1,000 souls; whether the Westport Union was last year, because of its notorious poverty, scheduled amongst the distressed unions; and, if the Irish Government will consider the special circumstances of the case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Sir, I have received a telegram from the Board of Guardians of the Westport Union stating they had received notice of evictions. I have no further knowledge of the subject. The Westport Union was last year included amongst the distressed Unions.

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—TONGA.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received any information concerning the recent disturbances in the Island of Tonga; whether the honourable Shirley Baker, upon whom the attack was made, was formerly a Wesleyan missionary, and has since organized a government in Tonga, of which he is the chief member; and, whether Mr. Shirley Baker is a British subject; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government will direct the High Commissioner in the Pacific to institute an inquiry into his conduct and proceedings?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The last information received on the question is contained in a telegram from Admiral Tryon of the 11th instant, stating that there had been disturbances in Tongatabu last month; but that by the last accounts they had subsided, and the King's orders were being obeyed. Mr. Shirley Baker, to whom reference is made, was formerly a Wesleyan missionary. He is, I believe, styled the Premier, and controls the government of the islands. He is a British subject; and Her Majesty's Government will consider, as soon as they have full and authentic information respecting the recent transactions, whether the High Commissioner should be instructed to take any action.

LAW AND JUSTICE—SALFORD CORPORATION GAS WORKS—"HUNTER v. LEVER."

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that Mr. Samuel Hunter, gas manager at the gasworks of the Salford Corporation, who was charged with bribery in connection with the coal contracts, and dismissed for such offence by the Gas Committee, is a Justice of the Peace; and whether he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the disclosures at the recent trial of *Hunter v. Lever*.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I observe that a gentleman of this name is on the Commission of the Peace for Ashton-under-Lyne; but do not know whether it is the gentleman referred to in the Question. The matter is one coming within the province of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and not of the Lord Chancellor. I will call the attention of my noble Friend to the matter.

INLAND REVENUE—CUSTOM HOUSE, DUBLIN.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return of the Staff of the Law Department of the Inland Revenue engaged in the Custom House, Dublin, giving the names, date of appointment, and present salary of each of the officials in that office; and, whether there

is any existing rule of the service as to the mode of promotion and retirement of the officers of long service?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): There will be no objection to furnishing the desired Return. Promotion is given by merit in the Law Department of the Inland Revenue, as in every other Department of the same Service. There is no rule as to the retirement of officers of long service in the Inland Revenue besides that governing retirements throughout the Civil Service.

ADMIRALTY — THE GUARDSHIP "BELLEISLE"—REPAIRS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the guardship *Belleisle*, now stationed in Kingstown Harbour, is to be removed this year to Chatham Docks for overhauling and repairs; and, if so, whether such repairs could be carried out in Dublin, Belfast, or Cork Dockyards; and, whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to replace the *Belleisle*, during the six months requisite for repairs by another warship, Kingstown being one of the chief naval stations in Ireland.

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The *Belleisle's* repairs could not be carried out at either of the ports named. There is no intention of replacing the ship with another during her temporary absence, which will be about six weeks—not six months, as is anticipated in the Question.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS—REMEDIES AGAINST TRUSTEES.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N. E.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether the existing Savings Banks Acts provide any adequate legal machinery for enforcing any award made by the Registrar of Friendly Societies against the Trustees of any savings bank for the recovery of money due to depositors; whether an award for the sum of £16,000, made against the Trustees of the Tralee Savings Bank by the then Registrar in 1847, on the ground of wilful neglect, was overruled by the Court of Queen's Bench; and, whether, in view of the inability of depositors in such banks to undertake expensive litigation for the

recovery of their scanty savings, the Government will take steps to enforce such awards in the future?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (*Isle of Wight*): Awards made by the Registrar of Friendly Societies can be readily and cheaply enforced under the provisions of the statute passed in the first and second years of the Queen. The statutes in force in Ireland in 1847 are repealed, and the Savings Bank Act of 1863 provides a machinery applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom. The *Tralee* case, as far as I can trace it, failed upon grounds independent of the statute. There is not, in my opinion, any necessity for Government to interfere in enforcing the awards.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS ACT, 1886—RECOVERY OF ARREARS OF RENT.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (*Sutherland*) asked the Secretary for Scotland, Whether, in view of the large number of applications to the Crofters' Commission to fix fair rents, the time necessary for the proper consideration of these applications, the recent decision of the Court of Session that notwithstanding the provisions of "The Crofters' Holdings Act, 1886," the landlords can use diligence to recover arrears of rent, and are actually using such diligence, the Government intends to amend the said Act, or take such other steps as may facilitate the fixing of fair rents in the districts subject to the operation of the aforesaid Crofters' Act?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (*Manchester, E.*): While there is no reason, either in justice or law, why landlords should in every case refrain from claiming the whole or part of their arrears; I am of opinion that they would be extremely ill-advised, both in their own and in the public interests, if they were so to press their legal rights that any crofter was deprived through bankruptcy of the benefits of the Crofters' Act before a decision could be pronounced on his case by the Crofters' Commission. I have no ground for thinking that this has been done. I can assure the hon. Member that I am as anxious as he is to facilitate the fixing of a fair rent by the Commission; but that I am not, as at present advised, prepared to re-open the question by fresh legislation.

Mr. Howell

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—REPORT OF MR. WALLACE MACHARDY.

MR. SEXTON (*Belfast, W.*) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Wallace MacHardy has yet presented his Report upon the Belfast Riots; and whether, if not, any inquiry has been made of him as to the cause of the prolonged delay and the date when his Report will probably be ready?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (*Bristol, W.*): I have received a letter from Mr. Wallace MacHardy in which he informs me that his time for some time past has been so completely taken up in connection with the Lanarkshire riots, he being the Chief Constable of Lanarkshire, that he has been unable to complete his Report, but he promises to forward it as soon as possible. [*Laughter from the Irish Benches.*] I do not know why hon. Members laugh at that. I should think that the riots which have occurred in Lanarkshire must be pretty serious work for the Chief Constable of that county. However, I can assure the hon. Member for West Belfast that the Report of the other four Commissioners has been very carefully considered by the Government, and particularly with regard to those administrative points, which, however, cannot be finally decided until we have received Mr. MacHardy's Report.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (*Newcastle-upon-Tyne*) asked, had the evidence taken at the Commission been published?

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, notwithstanding the Lanarkshire riots, Mr. MacHardy has found time to go to Belfast and hold communication with persons not examined before the Commission?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I suppose he considered he has not sufficient evidence.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—BELFAST POSTMEN.

MR. SEXTON (*Belfast, W.*) asked the Postmaster General, If the money due to postmen in Belfast for overwork done at Christmas remains still unpaid?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (*Cambridge University*): Instructions have been issued for the payment of the claims for overtime work

during the Christmas season at the Belfast Post Office. The preparation and examination of the claims in question have necessarily occupied some time.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SITTINGS AT SLIGO.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Irish Land Commission will arrange, on the occasion of the holding of their Court, next month, in the County Sligo, to fix some sittings at Grange, where suitable accommodation can be had, in order that some hundreds of poor tenants whose cases are to be heard may be relieved of the necessity of travelling to the town of Sligo, an average distance from their homes of from 14 to 18 miles?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The hon. Member appears to be under some misapprehension. The Connaught Sub-Commission sat in Sligo last month—they are now hearing cases in Mayo, and must make the circuit of the Province of Connaught before they can make further arrangements for sittings in the County of Sligo.

IRELAND (DISTRESS), &c.—DISTRESS IN KERRY.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Standard* of the 18th instant, that—

“During last Spring fearful distress existed throughout the West of Kerry, and nowhere more than in Ballyferriter. Some of the tenants who are now about to be evicted were, in May last, in receipt of relief from the public charity, when it was shown that for months past they had been existing on seaweed. For years they have been obtaining food through credit from the Dingle shopkeepers, to whom they owe more money than they do to Lord Cork for rent. The shopkeepers were ultimately obliged to refuse further credit on account of their getting insolvent themselves with the Cork merchants. Lord Cork’s rents are low as compared with the Poor Law valuation, but now there is not a tenant on the estate who can pay. The failure in the fishing industry has greatly tended to bring about this, for through fishing a large portion of the rents were paid;”

whether the rents on Lord Cork’s estate are in any cases below the valuation; and, if so, in what proportion to the whole number of tenants; and, whether the Government will consider the special circumstances of the case?

MR. J. O’CONNOR (Kerry, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, I wish to ask him whether this Lord Cork is the same Earl of Cork and Orrery who is Master of the Buckhounds at a salary of—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question which the hon. Member is now putting is one that has been refused on my authority.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I can only say, with reference to this quotation from *The Standard*, that I think it is, to some extent at least, unfounded; and in proof of that I may remind hon. Gentlemen that Dingle Union was not included in the list of unions in the West of Ireland to which special relief was given under the Act of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) last year.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that application was made to have Dingle Union scheduled under the Act referred to?

[No reply.]

FISHERIES (IRELAND)—CROWN SALMON FISHERIES.

MR. A. L. BROWN (Hawick, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to a Correspondence between the President of the Crieff District Fishing Law Reform Association and the Treasury, with reference to the sale of Crown salmon fishings in Scotland to private persons; whether the Commissioners of Woods and Forests have sold a salmon fishing on the River Earn to Mr. T. J. Graham Stirling for £100; also a fishing on the same river to the trustees of Sir Sidney James Dundas, baronet, for the same sum; whether these prices, compared with those of similar fishings in the same district, are in the one case four, and in the other case six, years’ purchase; whether any, and, if so, what steps were taken by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to ascertain the market value of these fishings; whether it is the practice of the Commissioners to give a preferential option of purchase of such Crown salmon fishings to the owners of land *ex adverso* of rivers and streams on which these fishings are; whether salmon fishings in Scotland are a Crown property entirely independent

of the land on which they happen to be; and, whether the Government will in future take steps to provide that the Crown may obtain the highest price for these fishings?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am quite aware of the Correspondence referred to. The statements in the second paragraph of the Question are substantially correct. I went carefully into the question with the Commissioners of Woods, both personally and by letter, at the time of the Correspondence; and I saw no reason to doubt that proper care had been taken to obtain the fair market value under all the circumstances of the case.

ADMIRALTY—DOCKYARD SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the General Purposes Committee of the Devonport Town Council have made representations to the Dockyard authorities respecting their action in canvassing the Dockyard men for subscriptions to the Imperial Institute; whether it is in the power of the Dockyard authorities to discharge any man in their employment without assigning any reason whatever; whether his attention has been called to a letter by an *employé* in *The Western Daily Mercury* of the 17th instant, containing the following statements:—

“A meeting was convened by the Admiral Superintendent of Devonport Dockyard, to which two men of every gang were invited, to act as delegates for their respective parties. The number that attended was at the outside 12, which would mean six gangs; and, taking each gang to contain about 20 men, 120 were represented out of 3,000 or 4,000;”

whether the above statements are correct; whether similar proceedings have taken place at the several other Government Dockyards; whether the word has been sent round officially to the men on board Her Majesty's ships in harbour, that—

“they must make up their minds as to what they are going to give towards celebrating the Jubilee;”

whether the Admiral suggested collecting cards in the Dockyard; and, whether, in view of all the evidence of dislike on the part of the men to this system of canvassing, the practice is still to be persisted in?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I have

already, on two previous and separate occasions, informed the hon. Gentleman that his information on this subject is erroneous. Of the eight Questions he now asks the answer to all, except the seventh, is “No.”

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—EVICTIONS AT VENTRY.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the accuracy of the statement contained in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 17th instant, that, on the evicting party of police leaving Ventry—

“A crowd of about 20 persons followed, and when they had got about 400 yards away the cars stopped, and, by order of Mr. Grey, the police brutally batoned these few people. Mr. Grey did not order the assault till he had a handful of girls and boys isolated from their friends. A young man named Bowler was savagely beaten by three policemen. Several girls were injured. The most intense feeling has been raised in the locality?”

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Sir, I have only to say that the statements in this Question are not borne out by the Constabulary Reports of the occurrence; in fact, they go to show that the statements are untrue; but I will make further inquiry into the matter.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—RICHMOND PRISON.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government had received from the Prisons' Board (Ireland) a Report recommending the closing of Richmond Prison, and the transfer of the prisoners therefrom to Mountjoy Prison; and, whether the Government will afford Members an opportunity for the examination of such Report by laying it upon the Table of the House prior to its adoption?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Government have received the Report alluded to, and it is now under consideration. The recommendation is made in furtherance of the views of the Royal Commission, which were in favour of the concentration of the Dublin prisons. There is no intention of laying the Report on the Table, as it is not

of a character that is usually so dealt with.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)
—TELEGRAPHCLERKS.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the title "Clerks," as mentioned in "The Telegraphs Act, 1868," carries with it the salary and privileges of "Clerks" in the Post Office, to which Department telegraph clerks are attached?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): There are in the Department over which I have the honour to preside a variety of clerks, male and female, with a corresponding variety of salaries. The Act to which the hon. Member refers does not define the salary or privileges of any officer or clerk in the Post Office. I may state that the class of persons in question have had their salaries considerably augmented since they were incorporated in the Civil Service.

ARMY MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT—MANUFACTURE OF STEEL AT WOOLWICH.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, What are the regulations under which steel is manufactured in Woolwich Arsenal; whether any extension of War Department steel works, or of plant for the production of steel, has been lately or will be authorized; whether expectations were recently held out to the steel trade that Her Majesty's Government would largely follow the practical example of other countries in confining the Government manufacture of steel to the working up of materials obtained from private firms on tender; how far the industries concerned may rely upon the fulfilment of promises on the faith of which large capital sums have been expended; and, whether an independent Board for the testing of all material of war prior to issue might be established with advantage to the public interest; and, in such case, if steps will be taken to that end?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): There are no special regulations for the manufacture of steel in Woolwich Arsenal. No extension of the War Department Steel Works has

recently been authorized, and none is in contemplation. I must, however, add that in July, 1884, there were three furnaces capable of casting respectively three tons, six tons, and 13 tons, and of these the two larger could be run into one mould. But the larger furnace was found to be inconveniently situated, and in 1884 authority was obtained to remove it to another building. This furnace, when completed, will cast a 15-ton ingot, and in its place another was put in hand of about six tons power. No hopes were held out that the example of other countries, in confining the manufacture of steel to the working up of material obtained from the trade, would be followed; but some of the firms at Sheffield and Sir Joseph Whitworth were asked to increase their plant in view of large Government orders for gun forges. This understanding was entered into by the then Surveyor General of Ordnance; but, unfortunately, it was not reduced to writing, and I have found no record of it in the War Office. The promises made in 1884 were partly fulfilled in 1885, when large orders were given; but I may say that I am personally satisfied that a pledge was given to the trade, and I will do my best, within the limits of the Parliamentary grants, to keep it. In answer to the fifth Question, I may say that the question of establishing an independent Board for testing all materials of war is at present under the consideration of the Commission inquiring into the Ordnance Department; and until I receive their Report I cannot come to any decision upon the subject.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked, Whether castings of 15 tons were something entirely new at Woolwich; and whether anything of the kind had been done before, and to any considerable extent?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Any extension which has taken place has been in pursuance of orders in 1884.

IRISH JURIES—APPOINTMENT OF
SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will consent to the appointment of the Select Committee on Irish Juries, Notice of Motion for which was given by the hon. Member

for North Antrim on Thursday, 17th February?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, when the Question came up on the Notice Paper he would be prepared to state the course the Government would take.

ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—REFERENCE TO A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE.

VISCOUNT CURZON (Bucks, Wycombe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government have decided to accept the suggestion made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, to refer the Army and Navy Estimates to the consideration of a Committee of the House of Commons?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The intention of the Government is to refer the Army and Navy Estimates to a Committee for examination and report, in accordance with the suggestion made by my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill).

NAVY—H.M.S. "AJAX"—GUN PRACTICE AT INNELLAN, ON THE CLYDE.

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he could give any explanation or details of the firing of a shot or shell by Her Majesty's ship *Ajax*, on Friday last, into the town of Innellan, on the shores of the Clyde; and, whether he would give instructions that such bombardment by Her Majesty's ships in the Firth of Clyde should not be repeated?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I have had inquiries made into the transaction, and I am informed that an accidental discharge of one of the *Ajax* turret guns occurred while she was on her way down the Clyde. The exact cause of the misadventure has not yet been fully ascertained; but it appears to have resulted from some accidental disturbance of the electric gun circuit. The cause of the accident will be fully inquired into by officers specially selected for the purpose. An officer has been sent from the Admiralty to investigate the amount of damage done to private property at

Innellan, with a view to its being made good.

ADMIRALTY—REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NAVAL CONTRACTS.

MR. R. W. DUFF (Banffshire) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention had been directed to a summary of the Report of the Committee relating to Naval Contracts, which appeared in a daily newspaper last Friday; and, whether the noble Lord could inform the House as to the source of that journal's information; and, also, when the Report was likely to be laid on the Table of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I saw that a certain portion of the Report in question appeared in a daily newspaper; but I have no means of ascertaining how it got there. The Committee was not a Departmental one; but it had the advantage of having upon it several well-known Members of Parliament. I propose to lay the Report on the Table, together with other Reports relating to Dockyard Administration, in a short time.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — APPOINTMENT OF SIR THOMAS ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF WATERFORD.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Sir Thomas Esmonde, recently appointed High Sheriff of the County of Waterford, was the same gentleman which *The Pall Mall Gazette* of that evening described as being engaged on the previous day in defying and defeating the proclamation of a meeting by the Lord Lieutenant; and, if so, what steps the Government intended to take?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) rose to Order. He wished to know whether the right hon. Gentleman would apply the same rule which he had laid down on a previous occasion—namely, not to answer any Question in reference to an absent person who had not the means of defending himself?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I am not aware that I laid down any such rule. What I protested against was against a Question being given Notice of by an hon. Member as arising out of

another without the faintest Notice to me that any such Question would be asked. I am not disposed to take for granted every item of intelligence that appears in *The Pall Mall Gazette*; but I may say that the action of Sir Thomas Esmonde, with reference to the appointment of a Sub-Sheriff, has already been brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor, and, if the paragraph be true, there will be no delay in dealing with it.

COAL MINES—EXPLOSION AT CWTCH RHONDDA, SOUTH WALES.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he could give the House any information respecting the terrible colliery explosion in Wales?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he had received a telegram to the following effect:—

“It is now ascertained that 37 lives have been lost at National Colliery explosion; 19 bodies brought up; difficulty in removing remainder until ventilation is further restored, which is being pushed rapidly. (Signed) ROBSON, Mines Inspector.”

AFFAIRS OF BULGARIA—THE DEBATE.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has reason to modify his statement made on Friday during the debate on Bulgarian affairs, that the Earl of Iddesleigh did not give Mr. Condie Stephen a letter of introduction to an eminent financial firm in the City?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I find that the Earl of Iddesleigh did give to Mr. Condie Stephen a private and personal letter of introduction to a member of a financial house, he having been requested by the Bulgarian Government to inquire as to their prospects of effecting a loan. What I stated on Friday was that the matter was not within my knowledge, or of that of Members of the Government sitting beside me.

PRIVILEGE.

—o—

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF A PAPER—PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. MUNDELLA: I deeply regret, I am under the necessity for the first

time since I have been a Member of this House, of asking for its indulgence in order to enable me to make a brief personal statement. My first intimation as to the subject I am about to refer to, arose from the reports in the newspapers of Saturday morning, to the effect that, at the close of the Business of the House on Friday night, and just previous to the adjournment, the hon. Member for East Bradford (Mr. Byron-Reed) put a Question to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Trade (Baron Henry de Worms) relating to the premature publication of the Merchandize Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill of the Government in *The Sheffield Independent* of the 18th instant. The Question was answered by the Secretary to the Board of Trade. I am bound to say, that I am entirely dependent on the newspaper reports for what occurred, but I gather that I have been charged with a breach of confidence, and a breach of the Privileges of the House. The hon. Member for East Bradford, in answer to an inquiry by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) as to whether he had given Notice to the Gentleman affected by the Question, said that he had done so through a messenger of the House. Well, in fact, the first intimation I have received of what occurred was when I opened the Saturday papers. After having read the papers, I proceeded to read my letters, and found one from the hon. Member for East Bradford. The letter was dated as having been posted on the 19th of February (Saturday), and having been delivered on the 19th February. From inquiries which I had made at the Post Office, it appears that the letter must have been posted after the rising of the House on Friday night. I do not impute it as a fault to the hon. Gentleman; I only wish to state the facts. The letter simply informed me that the hon. Member for East Bradford intended to ask a Question relating to the premature publication in *The Sheffield Independent* of the Merchandize Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill. On Sunday I saw several Members, who practically confirmed the reports in the newspapers. It is quite true that through the courtesy of the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade (Lord Stanley of Preston) I received, on Thursday night, a copy of the Bill in question, and it was delivered

to Members on Friday morning. The Secretary to the Board of Trade also told me, on Thursday night, that the Bill had been posted to me. Soon after I received the Bill, on the same night, I received an application from one of the ubiquitous and clever gentlemen of the Press, who are always on the look-out for information, for permission to publish the Bill. The gentleman pressed me very much, telling me that it was sure to appear next morning, and that it was a public document already, for it had been sent to the other Members for Sheffield, to the Corporation, and to the Cutlers' Company. I replied that that might be quite true, but that the conditions imposed on me by the President of the Board of Trade did not allow me to communicate the Bill, and I definitely refused to allow the gentleman to have the Bill. I then discussed with the gentleman a number of statements respecting the Bill which had been published, for I am bound to say that I never hardly knew of a Bill respecting which so many official *communiqués* had been made, all being to newspapers which have the confidence of the Government. I explained all this to the gentleman, and discussed with him how the Bill affected certain provisions of the Bill on the same subject I myself introduced last year. When I came to examine the Bill I found that it was one of a rather voluminous and most technical character, covering eight pages of print; but when I turned to *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* I found that, so far from the Bill having appeared in its columns, there only appeared some 50 or 60 lines of notes, mostly made up from the conversation which I had had with the gentleman who waited upon me. A very much longer account of the same Bill had appeared in a certain Conservative newspaper in Sheffield on the Tuesday, three days before the publication of the short notice in *The Independent*; and which had all the appearance of an authentic document. I have, moreover, placed myself in communication with the authorities of the House, and have been told by them that, if I had actually parted with a copy of the Bill, I should not have been guilty of a breach of the Privileges of the House. It is no breach of Privilege to publish a Bill that has been read a first time three weeks ago, and which ought to have been printed

and in the hands of Members long ago. The notice in the Conservative newspaper actually appeared before the Bill was in the hands of Members; but the notice in *The Independent* did not appear until after the Bill had become a public document. Therefore, the only complaint that is really made against me is, that I have discussed with a newspaper reporter matter that had appeared in the Conservative newspaper in Sheffield three days before. I hope that I have satisfied the House that I have not been guilty, either of a breach of Privilege or breach of confidence.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (BARON HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I think it is unnecessary to ask the House to acquit me of a wilful breach of courtesy to any Member of the House, and I hope that the House will believe that, had it been in my power to do so, I would have communicated to the right hon. Gentleman the question to which the present discussion related. As a matter of fact, the hon. Member for East Bradford (Mr. Byron Reed) did write a letter to the right hon. Gentleman, which was handed to one of the messengers of the House; and, moreover, I communicated with the Front Opposition Bench through the usual channels that a Question had been put to me, so as to give the right hon. Gentleman facilities for answering as the other hon. Members for Sheffield had done.

MR. MUNDELLA: I was in the House on Friday night at 9 o'clock, when I left for home. It would have been quite easy to communicate with me.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: An endeavour was certainly made to communicate with the right hon. Gentleman. It is nobody's fault but his own that the right hon. Gentleman was not in his place on Friday after 9 o'clock. But, as regards his answer, the right hon. Gentleman tries to draw a subtle distinction between a breach of Privilege and a breach of confidence. The Bill which reached the hands of the right hon. Gentleman was marked "Confidential." The right hon. Gentleman has attempted to establish a parallel between the article in *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* and the notice in *The Independent*; but there is no sort of resemblance between the two, and if any proof were wanting that the conversation between

the right hon. Gentleman and the member of the Press was based upon the Bill, is proved by the way in which he accurately described its contents so confidentially communicated to him, and the use of the words "false in any material respect," which words appear only in the last draft of the Bill, and could not have been seen by anybody except the right hon. Gentleman and the other Sheffield Members. It would appear, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman certainly communicated the contents of the Bill to the reporter, who, in his turn, communicated them to *The Independent*. It is not for me to say what value the right hon. Gentleman attaches to the direction to regard the Bill as a confidential document; but it is clear that if he did not hand the Bill itself, he must certainly have communicated its contents to the reporter of *The Sheffield Independent*, and that, if not a breach of Privilege, was to some extent a breach of the confidential nature of the endorsement. The right hon. Gentleman has laid stress on the fact that he knew that the Bill had been sent to the Cutlers' Company and the Corporation. But the right hon. Gentleman could not have known that, the only person having the knowledge being the person who had sent the Bill.

MR. MUNDELLA: The hon. Gentleman told me himself that he had sent the Bill to the Cutlers' Company and the Town Council.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: I hope my memory is as accurate as that of the right hon. Gentleman; and I assert that the right hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension. The Bill did not reach Sheffield until 8 o'clock in the morning, too late for publication in the newspapers of the day. Consequently, the argument of the right hon. Gentleman that when he disclosed the contents of the Bill it had ceased to be confidential, does not, to my mind, convey a valid excuse.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I trust that the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Mundella) will acquit me of any intentional discourtesy. I had first put my Question on the Notice Paper; but, on learning that I could raise the subject on the Motion for adjournment, I determined to take that opportunity, thinking that course more convenient and expeditious. The note

which I addressed to the right hon. Gentleman I gave, at about 10 o'clock, to one of the messengers, who informed me that the right hon. Gentleman was believed to be within the precincts of the House. I have myself made no imputation upon the right hon. Gentleman. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), however, did make a distinct imputation upon him; and it is to that hon. Member that the right hon. Gentleman should address his complaints.

MOTIONS.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

[FIRST NIGHT.]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I trust that a question of a character which makes it disagreeable for this House to entertain it may now be considered to have terminated, and that we may be permitted to proceed to the Business set down for consideration. Perhaps I may, at the outset, refer to some remarks which fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) last week, with reference to the character of the debate this evening. The right hon. Gentleman said that he hoped that opportunity would be given for a general discussion of the subject to which our attention is now turned; and I concur in the view of the right hon. Gentleman, that as much latitude as possible should be given to hon. Members for the discussion of the general principles which underlie the Rules which will be submitted to the House. I shall, in the observations which I have to make, endeavour as far as possible to avoid that kind of obstruction which results from the delivery of a very long speech. The question of Procedure is one with which the whole House is so thoroughly intimate that a long argument or complicated statement of facts is not required in order to prove that its consideration is a matter of urgent necessity. In endeavouring to obtain the concurrence of the House to these Rules I shall seek to avoid making a single observation which could excite the opposition of hon. Members on the

[First Night.]

opposite side of the House; and I shall try to recommend the changes which we favour, on the ground that they are necessary for the maintenance of the efficiency of Parliament; for the vindication of the authority of the House over its own proceedings; and for the purpose of enabling the House to discharge the duties which are entrusted to it by the country. I do not think there is a single Member in the House who will deny that, after struggling for many years against the difficulties with which the House has had to contend, it is absolutely necessary to place some restriction on that perfect liberty of debate which we have formerly enjoyed. Some change in the conduct of the Business of this House must be made. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Member for Derby) has already intimated that in his opinion our proposals are not sufficiently drastic; but it is with extreme unwillingness that we bring them forward, and thus place restrictions on that liberty which Members of this House have hitherto enjoyed. The first Rule is one founded upon the Rule with regard to closure which is at present in existence, and which has been put in force under your authority. There is, however, a marked change. Instead of placing the sole responsibility upon the Speaker of intimating to the House that, in his opinion, it is the evident sense of the House that the discussion shall terminate; our new Rule enables any Member to move that the Question be now put—that is, to enforce the closure, provided that he first obtains the Speaker's permission to make that Motion. That is a change of very considerable importance. The Speaker will, according to this Rule, exercise a control over the application of the closure, which will afford security for ample discussion, and for the rights of minorities. The Speaker occupies a judicial position in this House, which may be of the highest benefit to the House itself and to the country by securing the rights of minorities and, at the same time, the dignity of the House of Commons; securing the rights of minorities without, however, allowing them to become a tyrannical obstruction to the Business of the House. By this Rule full security will be obtained that the debate shall not be closed until, in the judgment of the Speaker, the discussion has been sufficient. Pri-

vate Members are particularly interested in this matter—it is especially their interest that the business of the country should be expeditiously transacted; for, at present, the Government have constantly to ask for special facilities which deprive private Members of their opportunities of bringing forward those subjects in which they are peculiarly interested. The proposals we make under the head of “devolution” do not go so far as the right hon. Gentleman opposite would, I believe, desire. We do not propose to divide the House into four or five Grand Committees for the consideration of all Bills. There is no security that if a Committee of one-fourth or one-fifth of the House had considered an important measure minutely in Committee, the other three-fourths or four-fifths would not deal with it again at great length when the measure returned to the House. Our proposal is to restore the Standing Committees which were in operation some time ago, to create another Grand Committee, and to refer to these Committees certain classes of Bills. The proposals of the Government are before the House as a whole; and I must point out that, unless the first Rule is adopted, it will be impossible to secure that change in regard to the Sittings of the House which I believe hon. Members generally desire. It is obviously out of the question that there should be an Adjournment at any fixed time, unless there exists the power of closing a debate before the Adjournment. In the absence of the closure the adjournment of the House at any fixed hour could be largely utilized for the purpose of obstruction. The second Rule deals with Motions of Adjournment, and, I think, will be recognized as a distinct improvement. To the Speaker, as the Officer responsible for the order of the House, and, as such, the custodian of its glorious traditions, the power is given of deciding what is “a matter of urgent public importance.” This we think is a far better plan than that of requiring a certain number of Members to rise in their places in support of the Motion. I shall not enter into details upon the other Rules; but when they are reached, I shall be prepared to urge what arguments I have in support of them. I commend these Rules to the House with some reluctance, since they are restrictive in their character;

but the time has come when such Rules are necessary, and I would appeal to hon. Members to bear in mind that they are not merely Representatives of a certain constituency, but Members of the first Legislative Assembly in the world; whose duty it is to see that its traditions remain unimpaired, and that it continues to be able to discharge its duty to the nation. Many hon. Gentlemen are frequently called upon to make the sacrifice of refraining even from good words, when facts and arguments have been stated over and over again without gaining any additional force. It is therefore the case that do what we may, and whatever Rules we lay down for the discussion of the Business of the House, we must still appeal to hon. Members themselves—to appeal to them to consider who they are, what they are, what they came here to do, and what responsibility is upon them. The duty is imposed upon me of endeavouring, however feebly it may be, to urge this appeal upon hon. Members of this House, because without the assistance of hon. Members themselves it is impossible for the House to do its duty. Make any regulations you please; but it is impossible for the House to discharge its duty by the country without this assistance. I know it may be said that the work of the House has increased. That is perfectly true; the work has increased, but our speeches have become longer and more frequent; hon. Members seem to consider it necessary to the constituencies that they represent that they should speak frequently and at greater length; and if they will consider the arithmetical proportion between the number of Members of the House and the time at its disposal, I think they will recognize the truth in a great measure of the saying that if speech is silvern silence is golden. I apologize if I have not made a full or complete statement of the grounds upon which I submit this Motion to the House. If I have failed in any way, it has been from the desire to make my statement as concise as it can be made. The Motion itself is one which is intended to apply not to our Procedure this year, but for many years to come, and it is nearly identical with the one which was passed in 1882. The only change, Sir, made by this Motion in the existing Order is that any Member of the House may have the right to make the Motion with your con-

sent. I will only further say that I trust we may now, without further unnecessary delay, proceed to the regulation of our Business, and arrive at last to the actual conduct of the Business of the House. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the first Rule which applies to the closure of debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

I.—Closure of Debate.

“That, at any time after a question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, ‘That the Question be now put.’ Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

“When the Motion ‘That the Question be now put,’ has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a discussion any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

“Provided always, that Questions for the closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members.”—(Mr. W. H. Smith.)

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Sir, I am sure that no one will complain of the general tone of the brief but succinct address which the right hon. Gentleman has made to the House. I understand that on this 1st Resolution we are at liberty, within due limits, to consider the plan before us as a whole. My remarks will not be many; but undoubtedly I think that it is necessary, as urged on a former occasion by my right hon. Friend near me (Sir William Harcourt), that there should be some regard to the general character of the proposals the Government have thought it their duty to make. These proposals represent a plan all the parts of which have relation one with another; and to proceed to the consideration of each detail and particular of proposals of this character without having endeavoured to take into view the general plan, would be very much like entering the Committee upon a Bill without having had a debate on the second

[First Night.]

reading. The right hon. Gentleman, on the part of the Government, has, I have no doubt, made up his mind that to put forward proposals with regard to Procedure is the best mode of expediting the Business of the Session. On that point I own I have the gravest doubt. The business of Procedure we have found to be a very difficult business. It has been beset by difficulties of two classes. One, and perhaps the greatest, impediment to rapid progress in this matter is that the question is treated as a Party question. Now, we were so unfortunate as to have the question treated as a Party question. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman himself, as far as I recollect, took any very prominent part in those discussions. I do not wish at all to revive the recollection of the individual shares taken by hon. Gentlemen, some of whom are no longer Members of this House, in the discussions, which were made Party discussions, on the subject of Procedure. But this I think I may venture to say—that as far as I and my Friends near me are concerned, our conduct with regard to the proposals of the Government will be precisely opposite to that which was pursued towards us. We desire, as far as we are concerned, that these proposals shall be considered strictly upon their merits, and without the slightest reference to Party considerations. I think that 19 days was the time it cost us to obtain the Resolution on the subject of closure, which has now been found by the opponents of that Resolution to be too weak, and which they are now endeavouring to strengthen. Having said so much, I do not wish to enter into any detailed criticism of former proceedings, because it might be a course which would tend to lengthen discussion, and I should wish the discussion to be confined strictly to the merits of the question that is before us. But there is, no doubt, another source of difficulty in this matter, which is this—that these questions of Procedure are matters upon which individual Members of the House do claim and will claim—and within certain limits ought to claim—the power and opportunity of forming their own judgment upon them, and will refuse to be bound by the authority of the Leaders on either side of the House. For my own part, individually, I should be disposed to say that, to a considerable ex-

tent, I should like to accept for the purpose of trial what has been proposed by a Government upon its responsibility, and after having instituted a comprehensive and careful investigation of the whole subject. But with reference to the remarks which I have just made, I greatly doubt whether putting Procedure in the van of all other Business, to the utter extinction of the action of private Members' Bills, you are taking the best and most practical method of accelerating the work of the House. But, Sir, there is one point in connection with Procedure with regard to which I find no proposal on the Paper before us. I find no fault with them for not making one at the present moment; it may be right to take time to consider what the exact form of the proposal should be. There was recently brought into conspicuous notice the existence of a Rule recognized by you, Sir, as a Rule not in any way owing its first recognition to you, but being adopted and accepted by you as instituted, I understand, under precedents established by a distinguished Predecessor of yours in that Chair, under which limitations of a kind almost undreamt of in former times, not only upon the liberty of the individual Member, but upon the liberty of the House itself, were imposed. As I understand that Rule, and I speak subject to correction, no subject can regularly be discussed in the House, if there is upon the Notice Paper or the Order Book of the House either a Bill on that subject standing for discussion under an Order of the Day, or a Notice of Motion given by any hon. Member. I own it appears to me that the greatest difficulties must arise from the existence of a Rule of that kind. And I almost venture to predict that it is impossible to go through this subject of Procedure without introducing some modification of the Rule as it is now understood and acknowledged to exist. The case, Sir, has become an extreme case. I must here advert for one moment to the practice which has of recent years arisen, and which has been found, on the whole, to be for the convenience of the House—namely, that of allowing the First Reading of a Bill to be taken without discussion as a matter of course, and exceptions to that practice—I will not say to that rule—have become extremely rare. Now, the consequence of that is that, immediately after leave has

been obtained to introduce a Bill, and after or even before its First Reading, as a matter of course the Bill stands in the position of an Order of the Day. The House itself has, therefore, determined that the subject shall be taken into consideration. The subject, however, cannot be taken into consideration without waiting for the Second Reading of the Bill. In the case of a Standing Order, I can quite understand the House deciding, by an act of its own, that a subject shall only be considered in connection with a particular Bill, and that it would be undesirable to consider it on the proposal of an individual Member, and without waiting for the Second Reading of the Bill. But even there great difficulty may arise, because it is now in the power of any hon. Member to introduce a Bill upon any subject and to get it made an Order of the House; and so he may commit the House to the discussion of any particular subject at the time only when his Bill comes on for Second Reading. I very much doubt, now that liberty and licence have been established in regard to the introduction of Bills, whether we should find it to be a wise course thus to enable the mere existence of a Bill brought in under such circumstances to absolutely preclude the discussion in any other form of the particular subject with which such a measure proposes to deal. I admit that the matter requires most careful consideration, and I earnestly hope that the Government will give it that consideration, as otherwise there will be no end of the difficulties in which the House may be placed by reason of the different Notices of Motion which may stand upon its Notice Paper. If the mere giving of a Notice of Motion may prevent the discussion of the subject with which it deals in any other form, these Notices may be given with the view of restraining debate and preventing the progress of Public Business. I will not attempt to argue the point further; but the sum of what I have said is an earnest commendation to Her Majesty's Government to carefully consider the matter; because I feel quite convinced that it would be better for a proposal to be brought forward upon the initiative of Her Majesty's Government than that it should be left to hon. Members sitting in other quarters of the House to call attention to the subject.

The right hon. Gentleman informs us that he has made a proposal with regard to the devolution of certain branches of the Business of the House which differs in some degree from the proposals on the same subject which were recommended by the Committee. What I wish to say upon this will not occupy the House long. I think it is a matter which really touches the heart and centre of the whole subject. I am more than ever convinced that it is idle and futile to think of relieving the House from the enormous difficulties under which it labours and to meet the wishes and the just and reasonable expectations of the country—of the three countries—with regard to the progress of Public Business by mere penal, restrictive, and repressive measures, be they what they may. The right hon. Gentleman made an appeal to hon. Members to make fewer and shorter speeches, and he entered upon the consideration of the point and touched it with a pathetic sentiment with which I can well sympathize, having myself dwelt upon the particular matter on former occasions in a much less perfect manner. The right hon. Gentleman may perhaps say that I then directed my observations to himself and to his followers, and I might reply that they obtained a flinty-hearted reception. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will be more fortunate, but appeals of that kind are more likely to produce an effect upon the House when they are put in connection with the frank and large proposals for what is called devolution than when the plan before it turns almost entirely upon changes in the mode of conducting the debates of the House, which are in the nature of diminution of the liberties of hon. Members. For my own part I am entirely convinced that it is a devolution of a very different kind from that which is contemplated here, and one very much larger to which we can alone look if we are really to achieve, or to have any chance of achieving, the great purpose that is in view. The late Government proposed originally the appointment of two Grand or Standing Committees, and the right hon. Gentleman now proposes to add a third, but experience convinced us of the absolute insufficiency of our own proposals. We found, in the first place, that they embraced a very small portion of the measures to which it was desirable

that they should be applied; and, in the second place, in certain cases where reference of the Bills was actually made the result was totally and absolutely unsatisfactory. We never supposed that in proposing these two Grand Committees we were disposing of the subject—it was meant to be a tentative experiment only, a beginning on which we were anxious to build something larger and more effectual. The right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues have shrunk from attempting any extended scheme of devolution. Our view was that by a scheme of this kind you would actually multiply the power of the House. What happened was that when Bills were in Committee, three-fourths or four-fifths of the House disappeared, leaving in the House one-fourth or one-fifth who took an interest in the Bill under consideration, or who were detained from accidental circumstances; but what we thought was that the smaller Bills should be taken out of the House and the large ones reserved for its own consideration; and that thus the House might multiply its agencies and at the same time extend its own power of working, so as, in some degree, to meet the desires and the expectations of the country, through means of a body fairly representing the House, and being in fact a miniature of the House. I am sorry to say that I regard the proposal now before the House, consisting as it does of what we proposed ourselves, with an addition still smaller in its practical extent and working as being totally inadequate and really amounting to nothing. I mean to nothing in this sense, that although on some rare occasions we may be able to deal usefully with a particular Bill, yet there is not the smallest hope or chance of its producing any serious effect upon the mass, and the increasing mass of the real Business which the House has now invariably to grapple with. With regard to the functions which it is proposed to assign to the Chair, that is a matter of the most profound importance. I was greatly disappointed at not having heard from the right hon. Gentleman some explanation and elucidation of the nature of that very high, delicate, and difficult duty which is to be assigned to the Chair in connection with these Rules. When the subject was before the House on a previous occasion we suggested that the Speaker should play an important part, and in a certain

sense it was said that the Speaker was to have the initiative, but it was distinctly set forth and admitted upon all hands that the Speaker's initiative was to depend upon his judgment on a question of fact, and not in the slightest degree on his own opinion, either of the subject in debate or on the manner in which the debate was conducted. One thing, and one thing only, he was to look to, that being a question of fact, as to which he was to exercise his judgment—namely, as to whether there did or did not exist a certain general state of sense and feeling in the House in favour of the determination of the debate. But it should be recollected that that proposal was denounced by a large portion of the House as being calculated to lead to the practical destruction of the authority of the Chair, and it was said with perfect truth that we must not overload the Chair. The great difficulty I apprehend in regard to the future constitution and working of the House, as far as the Chair is concerned, is that the House will get into a state of things in which you will ask and expect from the Speaker more than you can possibly get from any human being. I have seen the practice growing in my lifetime. The task of the Speaker 50 years ago was comparatively easy, and the selection of a Speaker was a simple matter, and was very soon disposed of. Now we come to a matter of very great diversity of opinion and very great difficulty. Are we, as it were, to break the back of the Speaker by putting upon him duties which it is not possible for him to discharge? It is now proposed—

“That at any time after a Question has been proposed a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, ‘that the Question be now put.’ Such Motion shall be put forthwith and decided without Amendment or debate.”

I wish to know on what principle is it the intention of the Government that the Speaker shall proceed in giving or withholding that consent. It is quite plain that, to put into the Speaker's hand and to charge him with the responsibility of the decision of a question of opinion, is an infinitely more formidable charge to lay upon him than the decision of a question of fact. Yet, so dangerous was it deemed to put in the Speaker's hands the decision of a question of fact that 19

days were occupied in discussing the subject before the House came to a decision upon it, and then only by a comparatively moderate majority. But now the Speaker is to form an opinion. On what principle is he to form an opinion? Is it to be simply this, that the Speaker is always to be ready with an opinion on every subject that arises on being challenged by any Member of the House as to whether the debate has or has not been continued long enough? That, Sir, is a tremendous responsibility. If, as I suppose, the Speaker's opinion as to the closing of the debate can be challenged at any time by any rash Member, whether old or young, so that the Speaker may at any time, by the action of one Member, be called upon to express an opinion, then I must say that a most alarming burden is laid upon the shoulders of the Speaker. Even if I could be sure he would never be so challenged, except on great and worthy occasions, I should not wish to be responsible for forcing upon the Speaker such a responsibility. You must always recollect that the Speaker of the House of Commons must, like Cæsar's wife, not only be impartial, but must not be suspected of partiality. If once he were suspected, the ground on which he stood would be undermined. Happily, we have been able to secure a succession of Speakers down to the present hour entirely above suspicion. Long may it continue; but you must recollect the jealousy of the Party opposite when we proposed to add to the duties of the Speaker the judgment upon a question of fact. Yet it is now proposed to place in his hands matters of a totally different kind and infinitely more dangerous. My desire is, as far as I can, to consider this question and to weigh the responsibility of the Government without reference to political feeling. But there are limits to the application of that principle, and I hold that what concerns the honour of the Chair of the House is a matter on which it is impossible for us to devolve our responsibilities even on the Government. I do not wish to give any opinion on this subject until I know the mind of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the Speaker, being known as absolutely impartial, is a person who can properly be called upon to give his consent, and that he is the proper person to discharge

the duty laid down in the Resolution. Before I can form any opinion I want to know what duty he is to discharge. Is he to be continually liable in any debate to have his opinion challenged by any individual Member? I hope that the right hon. Gentleman, or some of his Colleagues, will give us some explanation of the nature of the duties which the Speaker is expected to perform. I quite agree that the House has been able to look for a long series of years with unbounded confidence to its Speakers for the discharge of all the duties put upon them. But when a proposal is made of a character so novel as this, and so unlimited as to the possibilities of the working of the proposal, I think we are right in asking what duty it is that the Speaker is to perform. With regard to the general effect of the proposals I will not detain the House. I have seen with great satisfaction that all those apprehensions which were entertained as to voting the closure by a majority have entirely disappeared from the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite. That is a very great change indeed. It is the adoption of the principle for which we contended with great pertinacity and in the face of very great difficulties; and naturally we rejoice to see that our opponents have at length accepted our doctrines, and that those doctrines are to be enforced and completed by those who gave them the most determined and, I might almost say, the fiercest opposition. How do we now stand in this matter? Whether the debate will last a long or a short time I know not; Party opposition to the proposals I hope there will be none, but sporadic discussion there may be a good deal. Viewing the proposals as a whole, and viewing the manner in which they give the go-by to that which I consider the really vital, central part of the whole matter, the principle of devolution and the multiplication of the organs of the House for the transaction of Business, I cannot but consider that they are wholly inadequate to their purpose. I fear that if adopted they will do nothing adequate or commensurate with the existing necessity for diminishing the enormous mass of arrears, and the natural impatience in the country arising out of the inability out-of-doors to understand how this House, elected by the best exercise of the mind

and judgment of the people for the purpose of transacting their Business, and being able to regulate its own Rules, yet has so managed to allow these Rules to fall out of harmony with the time and its calls that the Business of the House cannot be done; and that the nation waits in vain from year to year—I am afraid it will soon be from generation to generation, for the satisfaction of its just demands.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I am anxious, Sir, to address the House upon the Question you have put; but before doing so I wish to submit to you a Question upon a point of Order which I would have explained to you privately if I had had the opportunity. I wish to know whether I shall forfeit my right to move the Amendments which I have put down on the Paper upon the first Rule if I address the House upon the Question now before it?

MR. SPEAKER: I expected that this difficulty would arise, for it is one which has occurred to myself. If the hon. Member addresses the House now he will have spoken upon the Main Question. But the Amendments down on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member might be moved by another hon. Member, and then the hon. Member himself would be entitled to speak on the General Question now, and would not be precluded from speaking on the Amendments which now stand in his own name.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I am sorry at this early stage to have to take a course which may put this House to some inconvenience, but I think it is necessary to take it for the maintenance of our rights. The Leader of the Opposition has made a speech, pointing out grave, clear, and momentous subjects on which information is absolutely necessary before the House proceeds further with the Resolutions. To afford the Government an opportunity of giving that information I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. T. P. O'Connor).*

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I hope the hon. Member will not press that Motion. We are, no doubt, in some considerable difficulty, and, although the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has very fairly

met the request that this evening, at all events, there should be an opportunity of discussing the matter generally, these extraordinary technicalities prevent us from doing what everybody in the House desires. All I can say is that if we cannot do this, and if the House submits to be bound by such technicalities, we are the most incapable Assembly in the world. At first we had some difficulty on this matter in the Committee. We felt that the whole matter should be discussed on the first Resolution, and the Clerk said it could not be done because there was no precedent for it. I am happy to say that my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) at once said—"Then let us make a precedent," and it was done. I hope that we shall not be the slaves of those technicalities which prevent the House of Commons from making progress with Public Business. If we do not have common sense in these matters this House will degenerate into a second-class vestry, and all matters in which the country take an interest will have to be discussed elsewhere. Therefore, I do hope that somehow or other what the Speaker has said will be carried out, and that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) or anybody else who wishes to make observations on the General Question, will not be subsequently precluded from moving Amendments. If this Rule is to be treated like a clause in a Bill I do not understand how either the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, or my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was in Order, because unless there is an Amendment moved to a clause in a Bill nobody can say anything unless it is a new clause, when there would be a Second Reading. The best and most sensible thing would be to treat this matter like the bringing up of a new clause, and that the Leader of the House should move that the first Resolution be read a second time. We could then discuss the whole matter upon it, but otherwise the whole of our proceeding will be irregular, and our whole position will be ridiculous. I hope the House will exhibit a little common sense, and rise somewhat above the level of the exceptional technicalities of debate. I think we ought at all events to deal with the matter in a way which would give effect to the desire of the

Mr. W. E. Gladstone

House for a general discussion on the Rules as a whole. If it is said that there is no precedent let us make a precedent. We are dealing with our own proceeding, and it is worth while that we should make a precedent.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I believe it was distinctly understood that on the present occasion a general discussion might take place on the Rules as a whole. The right hon. Gentleman has asked that these clauses should be read a second time; but the effect of that would be that no one would then be at liberty to refer to any other clause than that under discussion. I differ somewhat from the views which the right hon. Member has expressed. I have great regard and respect for the ordinary Rules and Regulations of this House, and I cannot think that it would be a desirable thing if on an occasion like the present, when there appears to be a little difficulty, at once to jump to the formation of new Rules. If there is any difficulty in the way of the hon. Member for Cork, I think with the general consensus of the House, the suggestion made by the Speaker would get over it, and if any other way, in accordance with the Rules of the House, can be pointed out I shall be willing to accede to it.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): A few days ago, when this matter was under discussion, I ventured to predict the very difficulty which has now presented itself. The right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had asked the Leader of the House whether he would allow a discussion of the proposed Rules, as a whole, upon the first Rule. The right hon. Gentleman said that he was perfectly willing to do so, but I asked if such a course would be in Order. I pointed out that it might be found not to be in accordance with the Rules of the House, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby thereupon mentioned what had been done in the Committee—namely, that he had proposed, as a preliminary point, that the Rules should be considered, upon which the Leader of the House (Mr. Smith) apparently assented to adopt the same course. We are now told there is no precedent for that. If you, Sir, should rule that such an Amendment could not be moved, of course there will be an end of

the matter at once; but I will ask if it would not be competent to move an Amendment to leave out all the words after the word "that" in order to add "these Rules be now considered." That would place the matter in the position desired both by the right hon. Member for Derby and the Leader of the House. I ask you, therefore, Mr. Speaker, whether it is competent to move that as a preliminary Amendment?

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has suggested that I should enter into some sort of collusive arrangement with some other hon. Member to move my Amendment for me. Now, Sir, I desire to move my own Amendments, and although hon. Gentlemen may think that my Amendments might be equally well moved by some hon. Member taking off his hat in dumb-show, that is not my opinion. I think it was distinctly understood that we were to be afforded some opportunity for discussing the Rules, as Rules, before we come to discuss them in detail together with the various Amendments, and I think the right hon. Gentlemen the Leader of the House is bound to carry out that understanding, which was as clearly a Parliamentary understanding as was ever entered into. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) has had no intention of an obstructive character in moving the Adjournment of the debate. He wishes merely to raise a protest against a breach of the understanding which was entered into in the presence of both sides of the House; that we should have an opportunity of discussing the principle of all these Rules together. It appears to me a very much greater breach of the Orders of this House to allow the principle of all the Rules to be discussed on the Motion that one of the Rules be passed, than it would be to allow a general discussion upon the first Rule, and then to allow an hon. Member who has put Amendments down on the paper to move those Amendments. It is not an unreasonable thing to ask that an hon. Member who has put Amendments down on the paper should be provided with some way by which he may be permitted to move them. It has been suggested by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow

(Dr. Cameron) that there is no precedent for such a course, and he has suggested that we should leave out all the words after the word "that" in order to insert that "these Rules be now considered." Now, there is a precedent which comes very near to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Glasgow; which touches it and runs alongside of it. In 1879, when the Conservative Government for the first time commenced its tinkering process with the Rules of the House—a process which has since been repeated by several Governments—the late Mr. Rylands, whose death we all so much regret, moved an Amendment to the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of that day, to the effect—

"That this House will forthwith resolve itself into a Committee, to consider the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Business of the House."

If there be no other way—I do not wish to prejudge the question as to whether it is desirable or not to consider these Resolutions in a Committee of the whole House, it is possible that a majority of the House may consider it undesirable to do so—but if there is no other way of affording Members an opportunity of speaking on the principle of these Rules, and of offering suggestions which may be of value in the course of the debate, and which ought not to be waste verbiage, I submit that now is the time when the House at large ought to be afforded an opportunity of offering suggestions of importance, which may affect any of the Resolutions in the course of future discussions. It seems to me that the Resolution which I have read, and which established a precedent in 1879, would then afford a legitimate opportunity for discussing the whole question without rendering it necessary to adopt a collusive arrangement, such as has been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. Possibly, some better way can be suggested, but this is a way which would certainly have the sanction of precedent. I think I am entitled to complain of the way in which I have been treated by Her Majesty's Government. It was understood, as clearly as anything could be understood, that we were to have an opportunity of discussing the principle of these Rules before we came to the discussion of them in detail; but now, on the very

threshold, I am met by the Chair, and no doubt properly met, with the intimation that no Member who has put down Amendments on the Paper is to be allowed to discuss the principle of these Rules, or he will otherwise forfeit his right to move the Amendments which stand in his name.

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) appealed to me as if it was in my power to do away with the technicalities of the House. It is my duty to point out the technical Rules of the House. It is to my great regret that any technical Rules which I am bound to enforce should cause the House any inconvenience. I quite feel the difficulty as much as any Member of this House. I do not think that the precedent cited by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) would apply to the present case. It was understood—at least in my belief—that a general discussion might be taken on the first Resolution being proposed by leave of the House. When that was suggested to me, I at once pointed out the difficulty that if an hon. Member spoke on the Main Question, he would be precluded from speaking again on moving an Amendment, as he would have already spoken upon the Main Question. That difficulty the hon. Member for the City of Cork has, if I may say so, very properly pointed out, as he does not see his way to delegating the function of moving his Amendment to another Member, but prefers to move it himself. I respectfully suggest that the best way would be to regard the whole subject as if the House were not to be bound by the Rule, that if any Member speaks now he shall be precluded from moving his Amendment. If that is the general sense of the House, I shall be glad to act upon it.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Upon that understanding I should be glad to withdraw the Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Amendment be withdrawn?

MR. GLADSTONE: As I understand your suggestion, Sir, hon. Members are to have an indefinite power of moving Amendments after speaking on the Main Question. Will it not be necessary to embody so important a decision of the House in some form of Motion? No—

thing, Sir, can be kinder and more satisfactory in spirit than the suggestion you have made; but it appears to me that when we find it necessary to depart from the established practice, we ought to formally record that departure. It would be dangerous to have a departure by a mere understanding. Mr. Speaker himself has been kind enough to make a suggestion; but I humbly submit that it is a suggestion which we ought to have in precise terms.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House should add to his speech the Motion "That these Rules be now considered."

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That could not be moved as an Amendment to the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman, because it would negative all the words that came afterwards; but if the right hon. Gentleman would, with the sanction of Mr. Speaker, withdraw for the moment his Motion that the Resolution proposed by him should be now considered, we might conduct this debate in the same way as it was conducted upstairs. That, at all events, would not land us in the unsatisfactory doctrine of waiver. It would be in accordance with the Rules of this House, and would accomplish the object my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian has in view, while, at the same time, what we are doing would be thoroughly understood. I think that is the most simple Motion that can be made—namely, that the Resolution proposed by the right hon. Gentleman "be now considered."

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I would venture to express a hope that hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House will be very careful before they adopt the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. We have heard a good deal about cobweb technicalities, and the necessity for sweeping them away; but I do not remember on the last occasion when new Rules of Procedure were considered, we heard anything of such necessity at all. Neither do I see any reason for the great difficulty in which hon. Gentlemen consider they are placed to-day in arriving at a conclusion as to the course they ought to pursue. This is not the first occasion on which new Rules have been considered. If I may venture to do so, I

would advise the House to adhere strictly to the precedents of other days. Otherwise, what guarantee have we that we shall not depart from the understanding of the other night, which was to have the general discussion on the Rules limited to one night. [*Cries of "No!"*] Surely I am entitled to my opinion. I am simply giving my own interpretation of what was stated in the House, and I and many other Members thought the understanding was that the general discussion should be limited to a single night. [*Cries of "No!"*] Those cries of "No" afford an illustration of the difficulties we are placed in by a departure from precedents. I hope that the House will pause before it enters into the suggestion of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) to depart from the precedent which was set four years ago when the Resolutions of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian were considered. If we do depart from that precedent, I am afraid we may find ourselves involved in all kinds of difficulties. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down gives us much assistance in the difficulty in which we find ourselves placed.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The right hon. Gentleman refers us to the precedent of four years ago, when the Rules were discussed on the Motion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone); but, on that occasion, it was not desired by the other side of the House to have anything in the nature of a general second reading discussion. Accordingly, on that occasion the House proceeded at once to the discussion of the Rules *seriatim*; but, on the present occasion, it is desirable, by common consent, to have such a general discussion. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has endeavoured to secure such a discussion, and it was the general desire of the House that this should be done. We are now endeavouring to arrange for this by observing, on the one hand, the technicalities of the Rules of the House, and, at the same time, by permitting all kinds of illegalities. The whole of the discussion up to the present time has been one continued series of illegalities according to the strict Rules of the House. According to the Rules of the House, neither the Motion made by the right hon. Gentleman nor

[*First Night.*]

his speech, nor the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, have been strictly in Order. Nor is that all. In order to meet the case of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) it has been suggested that the House should consent to the perpetual recurrence of a series of waivers of its Rules, so as to allow any reference to be made to the general question. I agree with the suggestion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), that if the Leader of the House were to withdraw his Motion, and to propose "that these Rules be now considered," a general discussion might go on without prejudicing the right of those who took part in it to move their Amendments afterwards.

MR. SPEAKER: I venture, once more, to interfere between the House and the discussion with reference to what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) has said—that if there is any departure from the usual technical Rules it would be necessary to put on record some protest that we are departing from the usual course, taking into consideration the very exceptional nature of the case. That protest has now, I think, been sufficiently made. I did venture to suggest, earlier in the discussion, that it would be possible for hon. Members to speak upon the general question, and yet not waive their right of speaking upon moving an Amendment. If the House thinks that an acceptable proposition I shall make no technical objection from the Chair. In support of what I said, I may remind the House that, in the year 1882, when the former Rules of Procedure were being discussed, the Chair took the same course as that which I am suggesting by assenting to a relaxation of former practice, by permitting that on each Resolution an hon. Member might speak more than once if he desired to move more than one Amendment, although those Amendments were not consequential. That was accepted by the House, and I venture to suggest that a similar course of departure from the usual practice should be adopted now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to say that the general discussion on the Rules is to be limited to one night's de-

bate? We had no idea on this side of the House that such a limit was intended. We are proposing to make an enormous change in our Rules of Procedure, and it would be very rash if we were to attempt to limit the free discussion of hon. Members to a single evening. I wish to put this question to you, Sir. Suppose that the 1st Resolution is carried, will it become *de facto* a Sessional Order, and be immediately operative, so that it can be used for the limitation of debate upon all the subsequent Resolutions?

MR. SPEAKER: If the 1st Resolution is passed, it will come into operation immediately.

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not necessary that we should continue this discussion. I understand that the object of the hon. Member for Cork was secured to him, and any Gentleman who has an Amendment on the Paper will be at liberty to speak on the Main Question, and yet retain his right to move an Amendment. Upon that understanding, I think the House may proceed to the discussion of the Rules. I have had no intention of limiting the general discussion to this one Sitting. At the same time, I hope the debate will not be unduly prolonged, although I fully recognize that some general discussion is necessary, and may conduce more to a rapid solution of the question than if we go to the Resolutions at once. I therefore propose that the general discussion should proceed.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool withdraw his Motion? [*Cries of "No!"*]

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): The Leader of the House seems to think it is agreeable that the Speaker should permit an hon. Member to speak on the general question, and then to move an Amendment afterwards. I must confess that I have been startled and penetrated with a sense of the impropriety of doing anything in an underhand way. If any arrangement of that kind is come to, I shall oppose it, and shall object to any hon. Member speaking first on the general question and moving an Amendment afterwards.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Upon the point of Order, I wish to know whether any understanding arrived at now will be binding upon

Members who are not at this moment present in the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The course I have suggested, if adopted by the House, would be binding.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I am desirous, in the first place, to express my greatest doubt as to whether this fourth edition of the alteration of the Rules of the House will have the slightest effect whatever in facilitating the Business of the country. I have been looking over events since 1879, when the Conservative Ministry of the day commenced the first attempt to facilitate the Business of the House by an alteration of the Rules of the House; and I have not been able to see that, in those seven years, the Business of the country has been even facilitated by so much time, by the alteration which then took place, as was consumed in giving them effect. I think the same thing may be said of the attempts which have been made, from time to time, by different Governments since then to tread in the same path. We had the Conservative Government of the day very confident that, if the House accepted the alterations in the direction of Procedure, all would be well, the wheels of the Parliamentary machine would go smoothly, and the Business of the House would progress. What happened? If those Rules are remarkable for anything, they are remarkable for the fact that they are almost a dead letter. For several years they were scarcely used at all, so utterly hopeless did it appear to trust in them as any measure for facilitating the Business of the House; and so matters remained until, in 1882, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) took the matter up. The right hon. Gentleman struck his plough deeper in the virgin soil, and he brought forward more drastic and more numerous alterations in the Procedure of the House. He recommended the closure for the first time in the history of the British Parliament, a recommendation which even the Select Committee of 1879 shrank from entertaining, and that closure, after many nights' debate, after long contention, and after much procrastination, was passed into law, surrounded by such safeguards which are familiar to the House; that it

has since been twice used only; and, as far as it has been used, it has shown by its application that it is useless for anything except to check freedom of debate. It is altogether useless for facilitating the progress of Public Business. The same thing may be said with regard to all the other New Rules which were passed in 1882. After an expenditure of great time and trouble on the part of the House of Commons, those Rules have been absolutely useless; and I defy any Member to say that a single measure has been added to the Statute Book in consequence, or that there is any measure on the Statute Book which would not have been there if the New Rules had never been heard of. As far as they go, they simply produce no effect, except in the direction of irritation and exasperation. The only feeling they produce is that of unfair treatment, which feeling certainly does not tend to facilitate the progress of Business, or to grease the wheels of the Parliamentary machine. Some day or other the Conservative Party, now so confident in their majority, by the help of 75 Liberal Unionists, will bitterly regret their confidence in their majority. You are doing your small part this Session to strike away some of those bulwarks and some of those protections for the minority, which you will desire in vain to bring back again when the hour of your bitter need comes. If there is one thing more remarkable in the difference between the Party in power and the Party out of power, it is that the Party in power always thinks very little of conserving the liberties of debate for the protection of minorities; whereas, the Party out of power always thinks a great deal about it. Her Majesty's Government, although they may be in a majority for a few months, ought to recollect that even under a restricted franchise they were more often in a minority than in a majority during the last 50 years; and that in all probability that state of affairs will be repeated and intensified in the 50 years to come. It will be they who will have to regret, and to regret bitterly, that they have done something—a feeble something, it is true; but still something—I suppose the best they are able to do, to injure the position of minorities in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House says that it is in the power of the Nationalist Party to

[First Night.]

help the Government to do without alterations in the Rules of Procedure. But every year he sits in this House he realizes more and more the impossibility of their doing the work of three or four Legislatures. How would the Congress at Washington get on if, in addition to its own work, which is quite enough for its power, it had also to transact the business of the 39 State Legislatures, each of which has as much to do as it can do? The difficulties with which this Parliament has to contend are insurmountable, and they are always seeking some avenue of escape. They have sought a remedy in checking debate; but the Rules passed for that purpose have proved to be absolutely unavailing. Instead of adopting this course, would it not have been better for the Government to face the real difficulty of the situation? Now that the masses have been admitted to the Franchise, now that, through the operation of the Corrupt Practices Act, the avenues to Parliament are open to young men of ability, albeit of slender purses, the state of affairs is materially different from what it was 30, or even 20, years ago. One machine is no longer able to do the work of the country; a division of labour is necessary. What would George Stephenson, or any other of our great engineers, have done if he had imitated the example of the right hon. Gentleman when he found it necessary to devise some new labour-saving machine in order to enable him to provide for the necessities of modern engineering and society. If he had endeavoured to accomplish that object by going among his workmen and imposing fresh rules upon them, he would have accomplished nothing. But, instead of that, he went to the root of the matter, and brought his talents and engineering ability to inventions that were calculated to supply the needs and necessities of the time. Nothing but failure will ever come from this fresh departure of the Government. They have thought to improve upon the scheme of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Now, I think I may say, without flattery, that when that right hon. Gentleman has made an attempt and failed, no prentice hand is likely to succeed; and, certainly, the right hon. Gentleman the present Leader of the House, notwithstanding his ability and amiability of character, is not likely

to succeed. After the New Rules have been passed, there will be nothing but exasperation and a feeling on the part of the minority that they have been ill-treated. The problem is now to enable the House to perform work which they have neither time nor sufficient physical capacity to undertake and carry through to a successful issue. We are told that private Members will be benefited by the New Rules, because there is some provision at the tail end of them to enable Members who have succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory judgment on the second reading of their Bills to get the Wednesdays after Whitsuntide for subsequent stages. No expectation can be more illusory. The Government will do as they have always done hitherto. They will say to the House—"We have two or three measures in advanced stages which we are desirous of saving." Therefore, about Whitsuntide they will take the Wednesday from private Members, and private Members will find themselves in about the same position as that which they occupy now. The same thing will happen in regard to this wonderful stoppage of Business after half-past 12 o'clock. Reference has been made by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian to the interpretation of the Rules which has recently been given by the Chair—namely, that Notices of Motion, even although it be done obviously for an unfair purpose, have the power of shutting out all debate on the Address upon the special or specific topic to which such Notice of Motion may refer. That ruling, I wish to say, with great respect, as far as it relates to the topics of discussion in the debate on the Address, is an extension of Mr. Speaker Brand's ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: That subject has no reference to the Rules now before the House, and I cannot allow the hon. Member to question the ruling of the Chair. If the hon. Member desires to do that, he must do it in the regular way, and by asking the House to pronounce whether I was right or wrong.

MR. PARNELL: I should regret, Sir, if I have led you to suppose that I was in any sense about to object to the ruling of the Chair. I have not the slightest doubt that the ruling of the Chair was most correct, and that it was absolutely necessary in the point of view of the Rules and precedents now in existence;

but I was going to point out, for the purpose of illustrating my argument, the necessity of making some alteration in the Rules, so as to prevent the unfair use of the right of putting down Members. What I said was that the recent ruling was an extension of Mr. Speaker Brand's ruling, inasmuch as his ruling only had reference to Notices of Motion and Adjournments of the House after the New Rules had been passed. I do not, for a moment, wish to criticize the soundness of the ruling or judgment either of Mr. Speaker Brand or of the present occupant of the Chair; but I wish to point out that it is an extension, although based on the same principle as Mr. Speaker Brand's ruling, and it may practically have this result. The Crown may address the House of Commons, and the Government may address the Crown in the usual way; but, if sufficient care is not taken, hon. Members may cover all the topics contained in the Queen's Speech and the debate may actually be closed after the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Address. Indeed it is not certain if it may not be possible to close the debate even before the Address is moved and seconded. Can any hon. Member imagine a greater *reductio ad absurdum*? Another point which I wish to urge upon the Government is, that they should give private Members opportunities for moving independent Resolutions upon Procedure. It is obvious that if the Government desire, as was stated by the Leader of the House, to take the House generally into consultation, they can only do so by giving the House fully an opportunity of putting down their thoughts in the shape of suggestions. The Resolutions of the Government cover but a very limited area; and it would be impossible, by drafting Amendments upon them, to get many valuable suggestions which occur to some of us; but which may not occur to the Leader of the House. It is of the highest importance that private Members should be afforded some opportunity of entering into free counsel with Her Majesty's Government, for the common object if we can—although I very much fear we cannot—of amending the Rules of the House. I wish now to say a word in regard to the question of the action of minorities in this House. I have said, Sir, that your Rules will not be effectual in forwarding the discharge of Public

Business, but that they will simply be effectual in limiting the rights of minorities, and to some extent in throttling debate. As to the action of minorities, it is to the efforts of minorities that the country owes almost every great reform. It is to the action of minorities repeated for days, weeks, Sessions, and even years, that you owe the most important measures you have ever passed. The Rules of the House I have always thought were really intended to spur up and push forward a lagging Government. A Government, having come into Office, like well-fed hounds, do not care to work; but private Members who are not so well fed, are in full possession of their faculties and are well able to work. I think you will have cause to regret it even during this Session if you unduly fetter the right of minorities as you propose to do by your new Rules. And remember all minorities make many valuable suggestions from time to time. I consider myself as one who has been in a minority during the whole of the 11 years that I have sat in this House, in which time there have been several changes of Government. I regard myself also as one who is likely to be in a minority hereafter, and I plume myself on having made some proposals which have passed into law; not one of which could I have carried out if the Rules of Procedure had been altered as the Government proposes. The pity of the thing is that you give nothing in return. You do not advance your own object, but you take away our reason for existence, in saying which I do not speak as a Member of a particular Party in this House, but as a Member of a minority. I say it will be utterly impossible for you, by mere restrictive Rules, to attain your object or facilitate by one jot that progress of Public Business which all hon. Members of this House so earnestly desire. With regard to the proposal of Standing Committees, I very much agree with the opinion that has been expressed, that they will only increase the block of Business. They will send down many Bills for consideration on Report. Again, these Standing Committees will practically consist of very few Members, and the great majority will be shut out from their deliberations. But do you think this great majority would give up its right to discuss the various measures? Would it not rather happen that the

desire to discuss them would be intensified and not removed, and would not the accumulation of Business towards the latter days of the Session be greater than could possibly be discussed? Well, Sir, it is my opinion that this result would follow. There are many points with which I will not now trouble the House, but reserve them for consideration when the various portions of the proposed Rules are moved by the Leader of the House. My prophecy may prove untrue, but I fear it will not. In my opinion, in the action which the Government are now taking, they are treading a road which has been described as useless and dangerous, and I do not see that by it the great object which the right hon. Gentleman has at heart will be achieved. On the other hand, if you adopt measures in the interests of the Nationalities of which this great Empire is composed—if, instead of taking action against the rights and interests of minorities, you remodel your machinery in a manner that would be likely to prove effectual, then you will be richly rewarded, and this House, proud of its title of “Mother of many Parliaments,” would have cause to be still more proud in the possession of an increasing and happy progeny.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): Sir, I look at these New Rules, not with regard to present circumstances merely, but to the future, when we may have not a hostile but a happy and contented Ireland. I regret that the Government have departed from the scheme laid down by the Committee. I do not think their proposals are in any sense an improvement; but, on the contrary, I think that their departures from the scheme of the Committee are in every respect departures for the worse. I think they are to be condemned in two ways—one on account of the mode and the means by which it is proposed to apply the closure in this House; and, secondly, because we are not provided with any scheme that would get rid of any portion of the Business which at present has to be transacted. And, therefore, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has said, I not only add my request, but entreaty, that the Government will pause in the course they are taking. I desire, as the best hope for the future, to maintain the authority of the Speaker,

the absolute submission to which has always distinguished this House as compared with other Parliaments, and I will do nothing which will jeopardize that authority. But how will this Rule work? It will not be minorities in future who will apply to the Speaker to have this closure enforced; it will be the Government of the day. But if this frequently occurred would that belief in the impartiality of the Chair, which is so important, be maintained? I do not suppose that anyone occupying so exalted a position as that of Speaker of this House would act with anything but absolute impartiality; but, notwithstanding that, the result remains that this Rule is to be enforced at the request of the Government of the day, and the effect of that may be serious. It must be borne in mind that the closure will not be ordinarily enforced in times of calm, but rather in times of great excitement and passion. I fear very much, therefore, that the result of asking for this Rule as proposed must be to weaken the authority of the Chair. I call on the Government and the House to consider the tenure by which the Speaker holds his authority. It is not by Statute; it is not by Standing Order, but by the submission of the Members of this House; and I cannot but think that by establishing a Rule which will cast the slightest suspicion upon it, you will strike, in a moment, at the authority of the Speaker a dangerous if not a fatal blow. I have been in favour of the introduction of closure into this House. But, looking at the present Rule, it seems to me that it will not only be used to put an end to unduly prolonged debates, but that it will be used to drive through the House a clause of a Bill—an attempt which I believe will lead to the most disastrous failure. The Rule says that if a clause is under consideration at the time the closure is applied, the Question “That the clause stand part of the Bill,” shall be immediately put. Sir, it frequently happens that one clause of a Bill consisting of several sections, and again of four or five sub-sections, is almost a Bill in itself, and it seems to me almost impossible that the House would submit to deal thus with a clause of importance. But if this is to be so, the minority will always have ample means of avenging itself if they consider that the closure has been unfairly used.

Mr. Parnell

I am glad the right hon. Gentleman opposite appears to share to some extent in these feelings, and I can only hope that the clause will be limited in such a way as to prevent its being used in an arbitrary manner. I am surprised that the Government have taken the step of again proposing the institution of Grand Committees. But there will be no devolution of the Business of the House, and we shall never have any real relief until the Government take the whole House frankly into their confidence and give every Member his share in the discussion. That was the plan recommended by the Committee. When is it proposed that these Committees are to sit? I presume that they are to sit at 12 o'clock, and that they are not intended to sit while the House is in Session. Well, Sir, that would only give them two hours for their deliberations. Under the plan of the Committee, if you divided the whole of the House into Standing Committees, it would not be unreasonable to suspend the ordinary early Sitting of the House until 9 o'clock, and allow for a certain period all the Standing Committees to be at work on a Bill. But you cannot do that with only three Committees. You cannot allow those Committees to sit during the Sitting of the House, because, if you do, you will draw from the service of the House 240 or 280 selected Members. This question, however, is of too much detail to enter upon now, and I will only say that I hope it is not too late for the Government to consider again some of the objections that have been raised upon this point. Finally, the general scheme of the Government seems to us faulty in these two main points—first of all the mode in which they apply the closure; and secondly, the manner in which they propose to constitute the Standing Committees. If, however, the Government will make improvements in these respects, I think they will find that our remarks upon their proposals will be made in no captious spirit, but with the intention of rendering the new Rules as workable as possible.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I would remind the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken that all the dangers he has pointed out equally existed when the Rules of Procedure, of which he was a consistent supporter, were

proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); and I am totally unable to gather from what it is that he apprehends these great dangers at the present time, unless it be the matter of getting the consent of the Speaker for the application of the Rule. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) professes great care for the rights of minorities. Well, Sir, it will be the business of Gentlemen on both sides of the House, before these Rules are passed, to see that proper safeguards are given to the rights of minorities, which, I for one, hope and trust will be strictly preserved as long as the House of Commons is continued. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian expresses great doubt as to whether to continue the discussion upon the Rules of Procedure *de die in diem* is the best mode of making progress with the Business of the Session. But on this point I may say that my recollection is that when the right hon. Gentleman introduced his Rules of Procedure he made their discussion, not only the first, but the only, Business of the House of Commons. The Rules and Regulations of Procedure of the House of Commons exist as much in the interest of hon. Members as of the Government. But what I particularly wish to point out is, that whether the consideration of these Rules be taken at the middle or at the end of a Session, their importance remains the same, and, therefore, the argument of the right hon. Gentleman falls to the ground. The main difficulty of the right hon. Gentleman, however—and here the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) agrees with him—is this. He appears to view, with great apprehension, the new and difficult and delicate functions to be conferred upon the Speaker, and he earnestly presses the Government for an answer to the question, "What is to be the nature of this new duty and function which is to be placed upon the Speaker?" And the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that he had discovered some anomaly and something quite unprecedented in the proceedings of the House of Commons. Formerly, he said the Speaker had to decide as to whether a question had been adequately discussed or not, but that now he would be called upon to decide on a matter of opinion, instead of one of fact. Well,

[First Night.]

Sir, this seems to me to amount to precisely the same thing, and, therefore, I think that the right hon. Gentleman has only succeeded in discovering a mare's nest. What will probably take place will be this. Some hon. Member will discover that a question has been adequately discussed; he will go to the Speaker, who will inquire why he thinks so; the hon. Member will say that a certain amount of time has been occupied, and, in his opinion, the debate ought to be terminated; on that the Speaker will form his opinion. Well, it appears to me that the Speaker has already had to do that, and, therefore, there is no new departure in this respect. The Speaker, indeed, has formed this very opinion and declared it on previous occasions, and he has done so in a way which has commanded the approval and support of the great majority of this House. The right hon. Gentleman has twitted hon. Members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House with being now supporters of the closure by a bare majority; whereas in former years they were the strongest opponents to it. But it is not strictly accurate to say that the proposal before the House is the proposal of the closure by a bare majority. If it were so, 101 Members would be able to close a debate, against 100; but if there be 100 Members opposed to this we now require 200 for the closure of the debate. There are several safeguards, however, and there is one which I regard as a very great safeguard; it is that before the closure can be applied the consent of the Speaker must be obtained. For my own part, although I have been always opposed to the principle of a bare majority, the time has arrived when we are called upon to decide as to the proper or precise mode in which the closure should be applied; and those who have any preference for one mode over another will have an opportunity of giving effect to their views before the debate closes. I have been opposed to the principle of a bare majority—and I am opposed to it now—because I have always been afraid that it might be made a weapon of mere Party practice. If that can be provided against I shall be satisfied, and, subject to that, my desire is to see an effectual mode of applying the closure adopted. But if the House is to make any real progress with Public Business in the fu-

ture, there is another matter even of more importance than the closure of debate, and that is, that there should be some addition to the Rules at present existing with regard to the closure of individuals. That has always appeared to me to be a point which requires to be dealt with by the House. When I first entered this House, 10 or 11 years ago, it was the desire of every hon. Member to conciliate and gain the ear of the House, and to consult its convenience when addressing it. I must leave it to others to say whether that has been the practice during the last five or six years. It seems to me that on many occasions even the decencies of debate have been outraged, and that the only way to meet the difficulty of restoring the state of things which formerly existed, is by some method of dealing with individuals who offend against the sense of the House in this respect. I will only add, in conclusion, that if no other hon. Member makes a proposal to that effect, I shall take upon myself the duty of proposing some such Rule before the conclusion of these debates.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.) said: Sir, I do not propose to look at these Rules of Procedure from an Irish point of view—if I did, I should be prepared to give them my most hearty approval; for when the time arrives that the majority of this House, which holds different views on the Irish Question, is in power, it will be a satisfaction for us to see a Home Rule Bill for Ireland rushed through all its stages by these means. But looking at them from the point of view of one who respects the traditions of the House of Commons, which has been the nurse and model of free legislation all over the world, which we hope to make the model of an Assembly of our own, I cannot regard with composure the havoc which it is proposed to make with the ancient Procedure of the House. What you propose to do is to transform this House from the august platform on which the Voice of the Nation makes itself heard, into a simple machine for passing Bills into Acts without due deliberation. I consider that what is being done by the proposed Rules of Procedure amounts to

very little short of a revolution. Several of the Rules laid upon the Table of the House have for their object to increase the power and responsibility of the Chair. As far as I understand the traditions of the House, for the last two centuries the Procedure of the House has been in the direction of limiting and restricting as much as possible the power and authority of the Chair. The very first Resolution throws a grave responsibility upon the Speaker, and the second gives him power beyond all precedent, having regard to the manner in which the Office of Speaker has been regarded in this House in former days. It is left to the Speaker to decide whether a matter brought before this House is, or is not, one of public importance; and on this point I need hardly say that a matter which is of vital importance in the mind of one man may appear of no importance to the mind of another. It is proposed to leave this question in the hands of a single Member—the Speaker—whose position in the old days was that he was supposed to have no opinion upon any question discussed before the Chair unless the question presented itself in the form of requiring him to give a casting vote. Here you require the Speaker to take upon himself a responsibility which the House has always properly withheld from him. In the third Rule, you propose to give the Speaker further power to decide upon Questions before the House. This is an increase of the power of the Chair which I say goes in direct opposition to the traditions of the House. There was a time when the Speaker was a spy on the House—a tool of the King and of the Governments of the day. Whether we shall ever arrive at a state of affairs when the Office of Speaker is held to be one over which the Government of the day can hold control, I do not know; but certain it is that many of these Resolutions go to place the control and influence of the Speaker largely in the hands of the Government of the day. So long as the Chair is filled by a Speaker worthy of his exalted Office, the danger of this will be at a minimum; but I do not think we can be sure that an absolutely impartial Speaker will always fill this Office; at any rate, the fact that the powers of the Speaker are placed at the will of the majority of the House will largely nul-

lify the advantage which would otherwise accrue to the House from the character of the Speaker. You are placing in the hands of the Government of the day the same power which was wielded when the Speakers were the enemies of the House; and the time may come again when the Speaker may, as the servant of the majority of the House, cease to be the champion of the liberties and traditions of this Assembly. One of the most important forms of your Procedure is founded on a jealousy with regard to the influence of the Speaker. I refer to the form of constituting the Committee of the Whole House, which enabled the House to shut the Speaker outside the door, and enjoy freedom of debate in his absence in a manner which, under the Speakers I have referred to, was impossible. There is another proposed Rule, the fourth, to which I have some objection to offer. That Rule provides for an adjournment from half-past 7 till 9 o'clock. I do not think that this arrangement can in any way conduce to the convenience of the House or the despatch of Business; because although there are few hon. Members in the House at the hour in question, yet the few are generally desirous of making speeches which they would perhaps not have an opportunity of delivering at another time. I venture to say, with regard to those hon. Members who occupy these Benches at the time of the proposed interval, that the great majority would prefer to remain here and deliver their speeches on the subjects under discussion. For this reason I think the House would make a mistake in adopting the Rule. These are, I think, all the observations which occur to me at the present stage of this Business; but I may also notice one of the phrases made use of, if not in the proposed Rules, at least, in the Standing Orders; and that is the phrase "The evident sense of the House." The evident sense of the House, to my mind, is only another name for the evident sense of the majority; and I say that to propose to provoke the action of the Chair on the supposed evident sense of the House is a most arbitrary proceeding, intended to cloak an action which, "under another name, would certainly not smell so sweet."

MR. CRAIG-SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick): I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Trea-

[First Night.]

sury (Mr. W. H. Smith) that the fewer speeches that are made upon the general subject, and the shorter the speeches are, the sooner we shall get to the real Business before the House. But I venture, as one who has given much attention to the question of Procedure in its different aspects, and as one who had the honour of being a Member of the Select Committee which sat last year to consider the question of Procedure, to offer a few observations to the House. Two principal objections have been taken to-night to the plan which is now before us. These objections were stated with great force by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); and they were echoed with, perhaps, no less force, but certainly with more solemnity, by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). The objections against the scheme are that it does not adequately carry out the principle of devolution of the Business of the House; and that by the new proposals with regard to closure delicate and difficult duties are thrown upon the Speaker. With regard to the first of these objections—namely, that the proposal of the Select Committee to divide the whole of the 670 Members into four or five Grand Committees, has not been carried out. I am much in agreement with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). I regret exceedingly that the Government have not seen their way to propose this Session that effect be given to the recommendation of the Select Committee in this respect. At the same time, I acknowledge that there are very grave and serious difficulties in the way of carrying out this proposal at once. There is, in the first place, a physical objection to the appointment of Grand Committees. If the House were divided into Grand Committees, it would mean that 160 Members of the House should sit together in the Committee stage on the different Bills. It is said there is no adequate accommodation in the House for so large a Committee as 160; but I cannot think that is a very serious difficulty. I should have thought that by the simple process of knocking two of the present Committee Rooms into one that difficulty might be over-

come. Then it has been objected that there would be some difficulty in getting competent Chairmen to preside over the deliberations of the Grand Committees. I cannot imagine that the House of Commons is so barren of capable men that four or five men could not be found to preside efficiently over the Committees. No difficulty was experienced in getting competent Chairmen for the Grand Committees on Law and Trade which sat some time ago. Another objection is that it might not be satisfactory to the public if the Committee stage of important Bills were considered by a portion of the House even if it were a fourth or fifth of the House. Now, anyone who knows the practice in this House knows that very often important Bills are carried through Committee when there are 40 or 50 Members present. A larger number perhaps may come in for Divisions; but it is well known that the real work of Committee is discharged by a much smaller number than a fourth or fifth of the House, consisting generally of hon. Gentlemen interested in the Bill under consideration. Another objection—and a very grave objection—is that there might be more scope for an insidious form of obstruction in the Standing Committees than there would be in the Committee of the Whole House or in the House itself. It is said that where there is not publicity, scope is given to hon. Gentlemen who wish to obstruct Business. My experience does not quite bear out that view. No doubt in the Committee on Law there was at one time serious obstruction, and one or two—certainly one important Bill was defeated by the tactics resorted to by some hon. Gentlemen. But in the Grand Committee on Trade there was no obstruction; and in the Committee on Procedure, which was a Grand Committee in a sense, there were no obstructive tactics of any kind. Though no one of these objections is insurmountable in itself, I quite see that all these difficulties may have impressed themselves upon the Government, and that the Government may have said “these difficulties in the aggregate amount to such a difficulty that it is impossible in this Session of Parliament to carry so great a change as is proposed with regard to the devolution of the Business in Committees, and therefore let us pass these Rules now, and divide the House into Com-

mittees in another Session if such a change is then thought necessary." There is another difficulty, and, perhaps, this one may have very largely operated with the Government. The Committee of last year reported that if the proposal to divide the House into Grand Committees were carried out, it would be essential that this House should be relieved of the work done by Private Bill Committees at the present time. The Government very probably said "let us clear the ground with regard to Private Bills before we attempt to divide the House as proposed by the Procedure Committee." Anyone will see at once that it is impossible to divide the House into Grand Committees, and for the work to be done properly so long as Private Bill Committees exist. It has been announced in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech from the Throne that the Government propose to introduce this Session a Bill to deal with Private Bill Committees. I think we may assume that the object of that Bill will be to relieve this House of work which is now discharged by the Committee. If that is the Government's reason for not at once devolving the whole Business of the House upon the House divided into four Grand Committees, it seems a very fair one. I am not here to defend the Government proposal, but if the Government's intention is what I assume it to be I do not think we shall have any cause to complain. Now, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) warned the Government and the House in the most solemn tone against what is proposed to be done by the first New Rule—

"That at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained 'that the Question be now put.'"

The hon. Member (Mr. Whitbread) seemed to consider that that was throwing a very onerous and delicate and dangerous duty upon the Chair. But surely the duty of stating whether it is the opinion of the Chair that the proposal made by an hon. Member "that the Question be now put," is a proper one to make at the time it is made, is not so delicate or difficult a duty as that now imposed upon the Chair—namely, to declare that it is the evident sense of the House that the Question be now put. It has always been a marvel to

me how it is possible for the Speaker to know what the evident sense of the House is, when perhaps there are only 30 or 40 hon. Members in the House, and possibly 200 or 300 within the precincts of the House. It seems to me that the duty which it is now proposed to take away from the Chair is of the greatest difficulty and delicacy; whereas the duty proposed to be imposed upon the Speaker of stating whether or not he considers a Motion should now be put, is comparatively very simple. The object of the present proposal is to prevent an hon. Gentleman, or hon. Gentlemen, at the very beginning of a debate, or at short intervals in a debate, jumping up and moving that the Question be now put; it is really to prevent frivolous Motions of that kind. It is much better for the House and the Chair that the initiative of moving the closure of a debate should be taken from the Chair. I should have thought we would all agree upon that point. I can understand that there will be great divergence of opinion upon the concluding portion of the Rule—namely, as to whether there should be 200 Members in favour of closing the debate if there are more than 40 Members against it. I have always been strongly in favour of closure by a simple majority. If we were to be guided by the Rules and Regulations of Foreign Legislatures we should find that in every case where the closure exists—except in Switzerland—closure is adopted by a simple majority. I know that is the case in Austria, in France, in Germany, in Holland, in Belgium, in Denmark, and in Italy; and in the United States they have no closure, but the previous question is carried by a bare majority, and in the Legislature there, the previous question takes the place of the closure in the other countries I have mentioned. A Report has been laid before the House as to the practice and regulation of Legislative Assemblies in Foreign Countries; and in that Report there are given the regulations of something like 11 Foreign States in which Representative Institutions prevail, and in every one of them—except Switzerland—the closure is carried by a bare majority. In Norway and Sweden and Hungary there is no closure. There is no doubt that if we do not now adopt the closure by a bare majority, we shall have to do so

before very long. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) startled the House by protesting in the strongest and most solemn manner against introducing the closure into the Proceedings of Committees of this House. He considered it would be monstrous if the clauses of a Bill were subjected to the closure, but at the same time he strongly advised dividing the House into four Standing Committees. Surely it must occur to the hon. Member that if we have Grand Committees of 160 Members and have obstruction, we shall require the closure in those Committees quite as much as in the House itself. I certainly hope the Government will adhere to its proposal to extend the closure to Committees. I consider that the proposed Rules are good, and I trust the House will be able to agree to them without much discussion. But I regret the Rules do not go further than they do. I regret, for instance, that no proposal is made with regard to the system of interrogating Ministers. A great deal of time is wasted every afternoon upon the multitude of Questions addressed to Ministers. I have always thought it would be very easy to have a small Committee to consider the Questions of which Notice is given, to divide them into questions which are purely local, and questions which are of Imperial interest; and that the questions which are purely local should be answered in the Departments by the heads of Departments; while the questions of Imperial concern should be answered in the House. I regret also that nothing has been proposed with regard to the system of giving precedence or priority to Motions. Amendments have been put down bearing upon the point, and I hope they will receive favourable consideration by the House. I regret that no proposal is made to limit the length of speeches in the House. I am glad to see that there is a likelihood of the matter being considered, Amendments bearing upon it have having been put on the Paper. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) was good enough to refer to Amendments of which I have given Notice, having for their object the extension of the time of sitting in exceptional circumstances—in other words, the suspension of the half-past 12 o'clock Rule in face of emergency. When the Resolution comes up for con-

sideration, I hope to be able to make an adequate defence of my proposal. At the present moment the House is perfectly competent to suspend any of its Rules, but it can only do so after debate. The gist of my proposal is that when a Minister of the Crown wishes to extend the half-past 12 o'clock Rule, he should be able to make a Motion to that effect, due notice having been given, and that the Motion should be put without discussion. If, under these Rules, we are able to carry out an effective system of closure; if we are able to alter the hours of sitting so that the Business of the Country shall be done in the middle of the day and not in the middle of the night; and if, finally, we succeed this Session in relieving the House of the burden that is entailed upon it by Private Bill Committees, we shall have done very useful work, and we shall have taken three long steps towards giving the House of Commons a great chance of re-instating itself in the confidence of the country.

MR. SALT (Stafford): The Government is responsible for the management and order of debates in this House, and when they find it necessary to put before the House a number of Rules and Amendments upon the existing Procedure of the House, we are bound to receive the suggestions with considerable sympathy. There is some difference between this Amendment of the Rules and that proposed in 1882. In 1882, the House was so accustomed to its old Procedure that hon. Members naturally shrunk from adopting hard and fast Rules proposed for the first time; but I think that now we can calmly and coolly consider the proposals put before us whether these Rules are exactly what each of us would desire or not. I hope we shall, as far as possible, make them perfect for the object they have to attain, and not expect Rules of Procedure from time to time—because nothing would be more dangerous than an annual meddling with the mode of transacting the Business of the House. After all, we must acknowledge that the present House of Commons is very different to the House of Commons of a generation ago. There is now much more talk than formerly. There is more talk because there is much more necessity for talking. The constituencies which return hon. Members to Parliament expect a great

deal more than constituencies did a generation ago; besides, I do not believe that the excessive talk which is complained of is altogether an evil. Now, in the consideration of these Rules, I feel we must be guided by two principles. First of all, I am of opinion that very great power must be given to the Chair. We must trust the Chair, and the Chair must have great power. We must remember that the Speaker is perfectly independent, responsible for his actions to the House, and carefully selected by the vote of the majority of the House. There is no question, as in olden days, of outside influence. The second principle by which we ought to be guided is that in dealing with any violence against the decorum and order of debate we should endeavour to deal with individuals and not with the House itself. If any person examines the old Orders and Customs of the House he will find that the great point aimed at in them was to maintain the power of the House itself and the liberties of minorities, while dealing out very strict and condign punishment upon the individual Members violating the order and decorum of debate. I do not want to go too much into details now, but there are one or two points upon which I should like to touch. There is very much to be said in favour of the establishment of Grand Committees or large Committees, but we must be careful in considering our ground before we embark in them. There are great difficulties in the way of Grand Committees. There is the physical difficulty of finding sufficient men. Hon. Members of the House have a great deal of work to do. Besides the consideration of Private Bills, the Public Committees—of which there are each Session a great number—have to be dealt with by men experienced in the Forms of the House, and accustomed to Business. There is, too, the work of the House itself, besides which many hon. Members have, during the day, to transact their private business. I do not say you cannot find a sufficient number of men to attend Grand Committees; but I think any one of the hon. Members of the Selection Committee will confirm me in what I have said as to the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of suitable men to serve on an important Committee. There is another point with regard to large Committees which is worthy of atten-

tion. It is, no doubt, true that the Committee stages of important Bills are considered by 10, 20, 30, or 40 Members; but it must be borne in mind that these are the very men who know all about the subject under discussion. If you come to divide the House into large or Grand Committees, are you quite sure you can obtain the services of the men who are the best fitted to discuss the subjects brought forward? In one case, you do the work well, and get the confidence of the public; in the other case, you run a great risk of doing neither. There is a third point with regard to Grand Committees which must not be altogether lost sight of, and it is this—that it is possible some day that the Grand Committees may come into very serious collision with the House, and that would lead to a very awkward block which none of us wish to see. The subject of Questions has been raised in the course of the debate. My view is that we must be very indulgent with Questions. Questions are a sort of safety valve; they are a safety valve for the public and for hon. Members themselves. During the last few years the time at the disposal of private Members has been seriously curtailed; therefore, no one need be surprised if hon. Members run riot somewhat in Questions. At the same time, some Regulations might be usefully introduced into these Rules with regard to Questions. A Question should really be a Question, and not an interesting little narrative about something which hon. Members of the House have been fully informed of before, as is often the case now. It is suggested that there should be a considerable alteration in the hours of debate. I must say I look upon this as a great experiment; indeed, it appears to me we shall really, by the change of hours, give the talkative Members all the more opportunities of talking Questions out. By the suspension of Business at the dinner hour there will be two opportunities in one day of talking a Question out.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Perhaps it is as well I should say that the proposal is, that at half-past 7 o'clock the Sitting should be suspended, and that the debate should be continued upon the re-assembling of the House.

MR. SALT: I stand corrected, but still I cannot help thinking that the suspension for the dinner hour would afford an opportunity to hon. Members to talk on a Question, which is very like talking it out, and he will return refreshed and invigorated after the dinner hour, supported by his Friends, to continue the talk till the closing hour at 12 or 12.30. I should like to see some larger alterations in the proposed Rules with regard to the Speech from the Throne. I think we might have a very short debate, only allowing Amendments upon very important subjects. By the Amendment which stands in my name, I have endeavoured to throw into words what I believe has been the practice of the House for many years; and I should be very glad if that Amendment, or some Amendment of the kind, should find favour with the Government and the House. I will not detain the House longer. I think, in many respects, the Rules presented suggest a considerable improvement in our Procedure; and I trust that we shall turn to their consideration in a friendly and non-Party spirit.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I quite agree with the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Salt), that we ought to approach the consideration of these Rules in a friendly and non-Party spirit. Private Members are far more interested in these Rules than the hon. Members of either of the Front Benches; and I confess I should have been glad had the Government seen their way to lay before the House the Rules as they came from the Committee which sat last year, in order that they might have had no Party complexion about them. With regard to the closure, I have always felt that the present Rule was most unfair, because it threw very great responsibility upon the Speaker; and I am glad to see that in these Rules the Chair has been deprived of the initiative. As to the majority by which the Resolution for the closure should be passed, I think it should be a majority, though an appreciable majority—not a majority of one or two or three in a large House. Perhaps if three-fifths of those present voted in favour of closure, that would be ample. You may depend upon it that the *clôture* will never be put in force unless there is a sensible majority in

favour of it. I have always had a very strong objection to the Rule providing that a Motion for the Adjournment of the House must be supported by 40 Members on the ground that it relieves hon. Members of individual responsibility, whilst depriving the House of any voice on the question of urgency. As to the alteration in the hour of meeting, I very much incline to 3 o'clock as against 2. I do not at all agree that the question of the time of meeting is one for lawyers and men of business in London only; those hon. Members who have much correspondence and are required to travel frequently to and from the country, are greatly concerned in it. A great deal of time might be saved if the House would go to work directly it meets, instead of wasting, as very often happens, half or three-quarters of an hour between prayers and half-past 4. But I rose particularly to refer to the question of the debate on the Address, and that of the devolution of the Business of the House. Everyone will agree it is most desirable that the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne should be shortened. If you are to shorten it, you must do so by removing all controversial matter from it. What I suggest is, that only the first and last paragraphs of the Speech should form the Address; that, in fact, the Address should simply be a dutiful and loyal Vote of Thanks to Her Majesty, accompanied by a promise on the part of the House that they will take all questions laid before them into consideration. I suggest, too, that the only Amendment that should be permitted to the Address should be a direct negative, which would amount to a Vote of Confidence in the Government. In this way the Address might be got through in three nights at most. It is said that would greatly reduce the rights of private Members. That I entirely deny. No one would be better off than private Members by the shortening of the debate on the Address. This year, in fact, by the prolongation of the debate, private Members have lost nine nights, or three Tuesdays, three Wednesdays, and three Fridays. The Government have lost six nights, which they might have used in taking Government Business. The same thing has happened in previous years, and, as a consequence, that early

in the year the Government have come down and asked private Members for their time. Now, upon the question of Committees, I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), that the House would put less faith in the conclusions of Committees chosen in accordance with the proposition of the Select Committee last year than in those of the Grand Committees such as were formerly appointed. The proposition of the Committee of last year was to divide the House into four or five Grand Committees, consisting of from 140 to 160 Members each. As has been already said, the Grand Committee on Trade did their work uncommonly well; but nothing could have been worse than the way the Grand Committee on Law did its work. If the House agreed with the Government in reviving these two Grand Committees, I should certainly protest against a third being appointed for Agriculture. The most important questions of agriculture really affect trade. I should like to know whether hon. Members would be willing to have a Railway Rates Bill sent to an Agricultural Committee? They would send it to a Committee on Trade. Would they like a Land Reform Bill to be sent to an Agricultural Committee? They would have sent it to a Law Committee. There is no question of a purely agricultural nature which cannot be properly dealt with by a Select Committee, or by a Hybrid Committee. I prefer, however, a number of Public Committees to deal with any Bills sent to them with the removal of all Private Bill legislation from Westminster. I have made these remarks because I have Amendments on the Paper in accordance with the views I have expressed. I have no wish to put forward my Amendments in a factious spirit; but I believe they will receive considerable support in the House.

MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): Though the question of recovering for Parliament control over its own proceedings is the question prominently before the House at present, it is by no means the most important point which we have now to consider. We must look, not merely to the possibility of passing measures through the House of Commons, but to the importance of passing them in such a form that they will work,

and accomplish the object which we have in view; and to secure this end, hardly anything that we could desire would be likely to be attended with better results than a proper division of labour in the Business of the House. This is a most important matter; but it has been sadly neglected in late years. I regret extremely that the Government in their present proposals have not thought fit to go as far in this direction as the recommendation of the Committee of last Session. I believe that it would be a wiser course to go even further in the direction of a system of division of labour by the adoption of Grand Committees. Anyone who has watched with practical interest the work of legislation of late years cannot fail to agree, in a great measure, with the condemnation which has been heaped on Acts of Parliament by the Judges who have to interpret and administer them. Very often the defects and confusion which have called forth the unfavourable remarks of the Judges have resulted from Amendments hurriedly introduced in Committees—often made by hon. Members who have not even taken the trouble to listen to the debate, and sometimes accepted by the Ministers or Members in charge of the Bill to save time; for of course they could not be expected to foresee that Amendments of the kind would not work with pre-existing legislation on the same subject. But, now, a very important political reason has sprung up for increasing the number of these Grand Committees. I believe it is the only way to prevent this country being split up into provinces, which I, for one, should deeply deplore. A long course of neglect and mismanagement and ignorance of Ireland on the part of this country has made it necessary in the opinion of a large number of hon. Members of this House, that a certain amount of legislative independence should be given to Ireland. I believe the necessity for this might have been prevented if a very statesmanlike proposal made in the Business of the House's Committee in 1874 by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had been adopted. He proposed that there should be a Standing Committee—including all Irish Members—to deal with Irish Business. Now, I believe that it would be a great impoverishment of the political life of England, Wales, and Scotland—I be-

lieve that it would add to the expenditure of the three countries, and diminish their material prosperity, if any separation similar to that now proposed for Ireland were to be carried out; and all that I believe is necessary to prevent it, is the adoption of the suggestion made for Ireland by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and I may also mention, independently by my right hon. Friend the Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. Bright). By the adoption, in the case of Ireland, of such a Grand Committee, the dangerous delay in passing remedial measures for that country might have been avoided, and much that is difficult in the present state of Ireland might have been removed at the outset. This is no theoretical proposal. The Scotch Members for years used to form themselves into such a Grand Committee; and the consequence is that in many practical matters, legislation for Scotland is years and years in advance of the requirements for England, Wales, or for Ireland. Is it too much to ask that that which has been proved to be a practical and successful way of managing Business should be adopted by the House of Commons? It would be easy to show, if it would not weary the House, how, if such a system had been adopted for Ireland years and years ago, the defects which existed in the first, second, and third Irish Land Bills would have been corrected in time before they became sources of discontent and, too often, outrage. Take the second Land Bill alone—that of 1870. By a defect unforeseen by anyone in that measure, the grasping, unprincipled landlord could, by gradually raising the rent in good times, gradually confiscate the property in tenant-right which the law had sought to secure to the tenant. If such a Committee as has been proposed had been sitting—an Irish Grand Committee—would not a single Session have removed this grievance which unsettled the confidence of the whole Irish tenantry in the Irish Land Bill of 1870? But I need hardly argue the question. Does it not stand to common sense that the Welsh Representatives are more likely to discuss the measures exclusively pertaining to Wales with interest and knowledge and information and sound judgment than Members for distant parts of the country, who have, perhaps, no interest

whatever in the matter; and, moreover, what fair chance have the smaller countries at present of obtaining their fair share of the attention of Parliament? I believe these Grand Committees would be stronger if, say for Wales, they consisted, in addition to the 30 Welsh Members, of 20 Members added by the Committee of Selection, as the presence of the latter in the House of Commons would lend support to the Report when it came back, and—being chosen as men of influence in the House of Commons—they would aid very much in preventing Bills being drawn without reference to the general interests of the community. But this is a matter of detail which I need not discuss here. In any case, such a Committee would, I believe, prevent the growing feeling of discontent on the part of Scotland and of Wales with the way in which Scotch and Welsh interests are postponed; and unite in a firmer union the three countries, whose very differences of character peculiarly qualify them, I believe, to assist and strengthen one another.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): A great many hon. Members must feel that the conditions under which the present discussion is being carried on are exceedingly unsatisfactory. We are, as it were, discussing in Committee what has not been treated to the second reading stage at all, and we are experiencing those disadvantages which for several years have been felt with regard to the Army and Navy Estimates; when, upon the first vote in either of those Estimates, a general discussion is taken in Committee instead of being taken while the Speaker is in the Chair, with the consequence that the discussion necessarily obtains a character of an unsatisfactory, indefinite, almost a purposeless, and certainly an unpractical kind. It is difficult to see what could be the issue of any objection to the general policy of the Government as shadowed forth in these Resolutions. Though we may be allowed a certain amount of latitude in discussing the general view of the Government as embodied in these Rules, we are technically discussing one of the Rules upon which it is impossible to take a general issue. Now, the Rules of Procedure in an Assembly which has a history extending through several centuries may *prima facie* be taken to be such as are best adapted

for the despatch of work; and I should be disposed to doubt very much whether any tinkering which may be attempted now in a hurry, under the Rule of Urgency, is likely to be of any permanent use. I very much doubt either the advisability or the use in any way either of these Rules, or of any other new Rules which would substantially interfere with the recognized and established Procedure in this House. I should have thought Government would have considered it incumbent upon them, when laying the present proposals before the House, to explain clearly and fully what is the mischief which they propose to deal with. Where is the disadvantage, or the inconvenience, or the evil under which this House is supposed to be suffering? I am perfectly free to admit that in the air there is a general sense of dissatisfaction at the way in which Business is conducted in this House. There are rumours of waste of time; there are complaints about the congested state of the Business of the House; and there are multiplied suggestions from all quarters, some qualified and others not, as to what is to be done to remedy the mischief which exists. But I should have liked to have heard from a responsible Minister, or from anybody who has a character to lose with regard to Parliamentary Procedure, what is the mischief it is proposed to deal with. We are told that the House sits for a great many months in one year, and for many times a day, and produces little; but the House has not sat of late years so many months, or so late at night, as it sat 50 years ago. In the years 1831 and 1832, the sittings of the House after midnight were considered more prolonged than anything we have experienced during the 50 years that have succeeded. Only in one single year in recent times has the length of the sittings of the period to which I refer been exceeded. Under these circumstances it is rather hard to be expected that we should admit that the time of the House is taken up with prolonged sittings which produce nothing. Do they produce nothing? Well, Sir, anyone who sat through last Parliament—I put it to any lawyer who is conversant with the Acts which were passed in the last Parliament—I put it to anyone to say whether the time of

the last Parliament was really wasted. Why, some of the most useful Acts that ever have been put on the Statute Book were put upon it in that Parliament of 1880. I see the Solicitor General shaking his head, but I suppose he will admit that the Conveyancing Act of 1881, the Settled Lands Act of 1882, and the Trade Marks Act were important Acts. Then there was the Bankruptcy Act of 1883. Was not that an important measure? No doubt; and I, therefore, say that the time was not wasted in those years; and anyone who avers to the contrary must be absolutely blind. In these circumstances it is fair again to ask, What is it that the Government complain of? If they think they cannot get a sufficient number of Acts of Parliament worked out, I would inquire, is it the sole business of Parliament to manufacture Acts of Parliament. After all, that is merely a secondary business. This House is the Grand Inquest of the nation, to vindicate popular claims, to assert popular liberties, to guard against corruption, to save the public purse, and also to remove grievances; and Acts of Parliament as such are only means to an end, and so long as the end is attained, the means are of secondary importance. The number of Acts of Parliament that may have been passed within the last five or six years is not a fair measure of the serviceable character of the work of Parliament. This question of Parliamentary Procedure has been made the subject of very prolonged and careful consideration by as strong a Committee, probably, as was ever appointed for a particular purpose. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) was Chairman of it. To that Committee were submitted schemes or drafts of proposed amending Rules, one by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), and another by the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). These schemes, the outcome of the mature consideration of both sides of the House, or of representative men on both sides of the House, were discussed at very great length, and with very great care; and what was the result of these deliberations? Why, you will look in vain in the Special Report they made for any such proposal as that

[First Night.]

in the first Resolution of the Government. Why have they discarded the Report of the Committee? If this had been a Second Reading stage of these Rules, we should have been able to canvass at length the policy of the view of the Government with regard to them. We cannot do that now, but we can plainly see what their policy is. To a certain extent they propose, in the first place, to meet what they consider the difficulty by a modified system of devolution; secondly, they propose to apply the *clôture*; and thirdly, they propose, as it seems to me, to put into the hands of the Speaker a still larger power than that which he already possesses. With regard to devolution, it requires some ingenuity to make out, or even to imagine, a system by which, in reality, you will relieve this House from any portion of the burden of work which rests upon it. You may shift the burden from one portion of a cart to another, but if the cart will not hold all that you desire to put into it—if the springs are not able to bear the load—no shifting of the balance will do. I maintain that no system of devolution will do what you require, that does not shift a portion of the work outside this House. If you are prepared to send some of the work with which you are overburdened to be dealt with finally elsewhere, it would be well if you would say so. If you do not propose to leave it to be finally dealt with elsewhere, then your system of devolution is very much self-deception. With regard to the increased power to the Chair, I hope I realize as clearly as most Members the respect due to the occupant of the Chair. I learned that respect in the days of Mr. Speaker Brand; but I much fear that if the present proposals of the Government are carried out, you will have this result—that, inasmuch as the Speaker will never be able to accept a suggestion from a Member of the minority, that the *clôture* should be applied, he will, after a while, be found by the minority always on the side of the majority. The minority may be misled—they may be hasty in their judgment, and altogether wrong—but it is not in human nature for them to avoid the suspicion that the Speaker is not in reality the catspaw of the Government for the time being. If it should always be a Member of the majority who can suc-

cessfully move the *clôture* to consent to the application of the *clôture*; if the Speaker should always really be moved by a Member of the Government, those who oppose the Government, and are in a minority, will feel, rightly or wrongly, that the Speaker is one of the majority. Now, one of the noblest functions of the Speaker is the protecting of the minority against an overwhelming majority; and it is of the first importance that the minority, and every Member of it, should feel that in the Speaker he has someone who has an authority, able, as well as willing, to serve him in the plenitude of his rights as a Member of this House. It is of great importance to the character of this House that nothing should be done that should imperil in the mind of any Member the respect and confidence in which the Chair ought always to be regarded. In regard to altering the Rules, there was in that Chair, many years ago, a very eminent and able man—a man whose conduct in the Chair has been from that day till now a pattern and an example for succeeding Speakers, whose slightest words and observations on great matters, on Constitutional Law, or the position of Parliament, and of Procedure in Parliament, have always been regarded with the greatest possible respect—I mean Mr. Speaker Onslow. In regard to the Forms of Procedure, he said—

“Nothing tended more to throw power into the hands of the Administration and the hands of those who acted with the majority of the House of Commons than a departure from established rule; that the form of proceeding, as instituted by our ancestors, operated as a check and control on the actions of Ministers, and that they were, in many instances, a shelter and protection of the minority against the attempts of power.”

But what is it that it is now proposed to do? Why, so far from making these Rules and Regulations a check and control of the power of Ministers, and a protection of the minority against the operation of numbers, it actually is proposed to increase the power of the majority, and to increase the power as well as the initiative of Ministers. I think that this expression of Mr. Speaker Onslow may be fairly taken to show that this proposition of the Government is one that so great an authority as he would scarcely put on the Blue Book. But the gentleman who reports this

statement of Mr. Speaker Onslow—Mr. Hatsell—in his book upon precedents, says—

“The axiom is true, and founded on good sense, that, as it is always in the power of a majority, by their numbers, to stop any improper measures proposed by their opponents, the only weapons by which the minority can defend themselves against similar attempts of those in power are the Forms and Rules of proceeding which have been adopted as they were found necessary from time to time, and which became the Standing Orders of the House, by a strict adherence to which the weaker Party can be protected from these irregularities and abuses which these Forms were intended to check, and which the wantonness of power is too often apt to suggest to large and successful majorities.”

The Rules framed years ago for the protection of the minority are now to be recast to make the minority still more defenceless than it is now against the wanton use of power by a hasty majority. Not only are the Rules so initiated a mistake, but it would have been right and proper for the Government to have put up one of their Members to explain how it is, and why it is, that the present proposals are made, and what mischief is to be dealt with—how it is proposed that that mischief should be dealt with by the particular Rules proposed, and why they consider these Rules to be the best possible solution of the difficulty against which they declare it to be so necessary to contend?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Mr. Speaker, I can assure hon. Members that it was certainly out of no disrespect and from no wish to promote what my hon. Friend and Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) calls a “conspiracy of silence,” that no Member of the Government rose to reply to my right hon. Friend. But the Government have felt—and I think the House will endorse their view—that this is specially an occasion when the debate ought not to be mainly conducted by the occupants of the two Front Benches; and that we ought not to engage, as it were, in a duel, answering each other from those Benches, without all Members in all parts of the House having an opportunity of submitting their views to the judgment of the House. But I gladly accept the challenge which was thrown down again by the hon. Member who spoke last, and who called upon the Members of the Government to state their views as to the

reasons which induced them to submit these Resolutions to the House. I did think, however, that the need of a reform of our Procedure had been admitted in almost all quarters; that it had formed the basis of many speeches, both by Liberals and Conservatives, at two consecutive Elections; and that hon. Members had repeatedly pledged themselves to their constituents that they would do all that in them lay to restore the authority of this House over its Members, and to endeavour to promote the more effectual progress of the Business of the House. [“Hear, hear!”] I hear the cheer of my right hon. Friend opposite, but I do not know whether he heard the appeal which was made to us just now by an hon. Member who seemed surprised that it was necessary to deal with Procedure at all, and who seemed to think that the progress of our proceedings generally had been so satisfactory and so much in accordance with the past traditions of this House that it was perfectly needless on the part of Her Majesty's Government to introduce these Resolutions. I am perfectly aware that that is not the view of right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench, and I rejoice to think from the utterances which have fallen from many of them that we may count upon their co-operation, not perhaps for the particular proposals which have been submitted to the House, not for the particular form in which they are introduced, but that they are at least as alive as we are to the necessity of reforming the machinery of our Procedure, and of placing ourselves in a position to deal with the growing needs of the Empire that are submitted to our consideration. I do not know whether the hon. Member who last spoke heard the speech of his Leader the Member for the City of Cork. That hon. Member admitted to the full the difficulty of dealing with the vast amount of Business which is confided to this House. He dealt with it, I admit, with the intention of drawing a different inference from that which is drawn by Her Majesty's Government; but, at all events, he admitted frankly the difficulty under which the Business of this House is at present conducted. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who spoke in a tone which I hope is an augury that we shall be able

[First Night.]

to exclude Party spirit entirely from these discussions, put before the House several matters on which I would ask, with the permission of the House, to be allowed to speak. I will not touch the point as to necessity of dealing first with this question. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian doubted the absolute necessity of dealing first with this question; but I say that there are many Members who feel that, looking at the serious Business which we have before us, to the intense anxiety on both sides to come to the legislation which is looked for by the country, and to the power to deal effectively with that legislation; we are consulting not only the interests of the Government, but the interests of this House at large, in losing no time in approaching the subject and endeavouring to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. If my right hon. Friend's indisposition had not prevented him from being present on the first 16 days of the Session, during which the Address was debated, I think he might possibly have somewhat modified his opinion, and that he might have thought it essential to deal as soon as possible with the Rules of this House. One of the first questions with which my right hon. Friend dealt had reference, not to the proposals now on the Paper, but to a very important matter to which he called the attention of the Government and of the House—namely, a practice to which attention has been drawn within the last few days—I mean the Rule that when a Notice has been given of the discussion of any particular subject at a future day, it cannot be touched in any way before that day arrives; and my right hon. Friend called attention very naturally and very properly to the abuses which that view might lead to. But I think it will not be disputed by any Members who have experience in this House that the principle that you cannot deal at once with a question that has been put down for a future day was not asserted for the first time by Mr. Speaker Brand, and that it is a Rule which has been the unwritten law of this House for many years. I do not know whether my right hon. Friends on the Front Opposition Bench will dispute that proposition; but surely it has been continually accepted as a Rule of this House that you could not anticipate a discussion put down for a future day.

Mr. Goschen

In the year 1859, on the occasion of a discussion on the question of Parliamentary Reform, Mr. Bouverie rose to Order and wished to know whether it was competent for a Member on a Motion for Adjournment to discuss a subject which had been placed on the Paper for debate on a future day. The Speaker ruled that it would be out of Order then to discuss a subject which had been fixed for a future day.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, South): On a Motion for the Adjournment?

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, but I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit it was one of the principles taught him in his earliest days in this House that it was against the Rules and the courtesy of the House for one Member to anticipate a Motion put down in the name of another Member. Indeed, I am informed that so strictly was this Rule carried out, that it was even considered out of Order to ask a Question at "Question time" with reference to a clause of a Bill which had been put down for future discussion. I am not contending now—and I do not wish to introduce a controversial element into this discussion—whether it is right or wrong, but I simply say that it is an old, although an unwritten principle which has guided hitherto our deliberations. It is a principle, no doubt, which, like every single rule or precedent that guides those deliberations, is liable to abuse, and that is the unfortunate experience which has been made in these later years, that Rules which for a long time were found sufficient to guide us have, owing to new practices or to new views as to the duties of Members, become insufficient or even dangerous. I may say that Her Majesty's Government will be perfectly prepared to consider the suggestion of my right hon. Friend and to see how far this great principle, which has its great uses, but which at the same time is liable to abuse, may be so embodied in regulations as to prevent the abuse and secure that which all must desire—namely, that there should be some order in our debates, and that it should not be in the power of any single Member suddenly to spring questions on this House on a subject put down for discussion on a future day, and by that means to anticipate a regular discussion. I will put it to hon. Members whether there is not danger in the opposite view put forward by my

right hon. Friend. If you may anticipate a future discussion, you may find the House engaged at most inconvenient moments in debating parts of subjects in an incomplete and impromptu manner, although they desire to debate the subject fully at a later stage. It is to be regretted that both in these Rules and in the suggestions which have been made, there appears to be necessary a considerable amount of strategy that was not used in old times. I am sure that there is not a Member of the present or of the late Government who does not deeply deplore the necessity that such Rules should have to be introduced. Everyone must feel the reproach which may be levelled at those who are responsible for the introduction of these Rules, because they have to say, "We are now compelled to introduce these new Rules which, in appearance at least, are intended to fetter that free speech which has hitherto been the great boast of this Assembly." Everyone must feel that reproach. We are most anxious to continue to protect the rights of the minority, but we are anxious that while those rights are guarded and respected, the majority may be able to do battle for the great interests committed to their charge, and to do justice to the ever-increasing demands of the country upon their time and their energy. The next point to which the right hon. Gentleman addressed himself relates to a most important element in the Rules—namely, of the Standing Committees and to that great branch of the subject, the devolution of certain duties to a portion of the Members of the House. I wish it to be clearly understood that the adoption of the Rules proposed by Her Majesty's Government will not in any way preclude that subject being dealt with in the future. The hon. Member opposite has spoken as though nothing had been done in the direction of devolution. But we are all agreed that if we can lighten the burdens of this House we ought not to neglect any proper opportunity for doing so. I may say that there is now before this House a Bill introduced upon the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, the effect of which will be to relieve the House of a great portion of its Business connected with Private Bills. Of course it would not be in Order for me to allude in any way to the provisions of or even to the effect of that Bill, but

I trust that I shall not be out of Order when I say that we believe that it will assist in clearing the ground, and that when we have disposed of that difficult and delicate question we may deal more satisfactorily with the question of Standing Committees. At present the great difficulty we have to contend with is that of finding the necessary strength to deal with the innumerable Private Bills. For my part I think that there are strong arguments in favour of Standing Committees and that there are also strong arguments against them, especially that one by which it is asserted that there is but little probability that this House will accept the work of such Committees. These arguments both for and against that proposal deserve the most careful consideration. But, while admitting that the principle of devolution has not been carried out by these Rules, we have not in the least prejudiced the question. We have measures which we hope to induce the House to pass, which will facilitate any future action in that direction, and at the same time we assure hon. Members that we are perfectly alive to the necessity in every proper and safe manner to relieve the Business of the House as far as possible. I now turn to another criticism which was made by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), with regard to the principle of one of the most important of the Resolutions before the House—namely, the arrangements made for the interposition of the Speaker in the application of the closure. It is perfectly natural that the attention of hon. Members should be called to the duties to be placed upon the Speaker, and no one can complain of the manner in which the matter was approached by the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentlemen opposite. It must be the wish of everybody to maintain the authority of the Speaker and to maintain his reputation for impartiality. We know that upon that impartiality depends the efficiency of this House, the credit of this House, and the reputation of this House. But we are prepared to think that among the hon. Members of this House, and of every House which shall be elected by Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen, we shall be able to find men who will,

while occupying that Chair, undertake the responsibility of guarding the great reputation of the Chair. We may have to place a heavy burden upon Mr. Speaker, and even now a heavy burden rests upon him. A heavy burden was placed upon Mr. Speaker by the Procedure Rules which were adopted in the previous Parliament. Let me examine for a moment what I call the rival modes of proceeding of the Rules as now submitted to this House, and of those which are at present in force. When we speak of this matter let us realize the two great forces which are to be brought into operation—there is that of the majority, and there is that of the consent of Mr. Speaker. I wish to know whether those who are prepared to do away with the consent of Mr. Speaker to the closure being put into force are prepared to accept the closure by the decision of a simple majority. [*Opposition cheers.*] Those cheers remind me that there are a large number of hon. Members who are willing to accept the decision of a simple majority in the matter, but they will not be supported by the hon. Members below the Gangway. In several speeches—and especially in that of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell)—we were called upon, in language with which I thoroughly sympathize, to protect the rights of minorities. The hon. Member for Cork was perfectly right in appealing to the Conservative instincts of the House to say that those rights must be protected—that minorities had in the past done great service, and that they would do so in the future. I certainly am not prepared to contradict the hon. Member for Cork upon the point. [*“Hear, hear,” and laughter.*] I do not know why the fact that I agree with the hon. Member for Cork on this question that minorities should be protected, should be a ground for laughter. But I state the fact with the most perfect sincerity. I have always argued in favour of the protection of minorities, and, although I differ from the right hon. Gentleman opposite upon the point, I am not prepared to hand over the entire rights of minorities to the tumultuous feelings of a majority even when tempered by the leadership of the right hon. Gentleman. I, of course, feel that he would do his best to moderate their impulses; still I do not feel confident that in moments of great excitement

any great majority, whether of Liberals or Conservatives, could be trusted with this power of closing debates without safeguards. What safeguard do we propose to establish? It is the impartiality and the authority of the Chair. It is for that reason—it is in order to protect the minority that the authority of Mr. Speaker is invoked. Much will turn upon the question whether you believe or do not believe in that as affording a protection to the minority. Right hon. Members and hon. Members opposite have argued as though the Speaker would be simply the mouthpiece and the servant of the majority. But we should have very different men in that Chair from those who have enjoyed that high honour if they were oblivious of the important duties that were imposed upon them of curbing the majority of the Government of the day if they should attempt to force the minority, and were to endeavour to deprive the latter of their proper privileges. Some pictures have been drawn this evening in which it was supposed that the Government of the day, even with the check of Mr. Speaker upon them, would endeavour to force Bills through this House in a way of which the whole country would disapprove. But right hon. Members opposite will agree with me that the country would condemn the abuse of the great powers intrusted by them to the Government; and therefore the minority would have the protection of the Speaker, of the Government, and finally of the country. The country would refuse to support a Government or a Party which abused their power and sinned against the first principles of British fair play. [*Cheers and laughter from the Home Rule Members.*] I am afraid that there are some hon. Members in this House who think they cannot rely upon British fair play. But if they had sat in any other Assembly, do they think that they would have had one-fifth part of the fair play that has been accorded to them here? Hon. Members below the Gangway laugh at that sentiment, but I would ask them to ask themselves whether if they had been in any other Assembly in the world and they had, as in past years they have done, attempted to thwart all legislation—I do not wish to revive those memories—but I ask them if they had done so, do they think they would

have received a larger measure of fair play than they have received in this House? I trust I may be allowed to use these words without offence; night after night we have speeches from hon. Members on that side, which, however much they may grate on the feelings of others, are listened to, I hope they will acknowledge, with fairness. [“No, no!” from the *Home Rule* Members.] If hon. Members will not admit it I shall not be able to persuade them. I venture, then, in the face of that declaration, to say that in no Assembly in the world—either in America or France or Germany, or any part of the civilized world, would they have received fairer treatment than they have received at the hands of the House. I have spoken of the protection to minorities, which, in my judgment, would be afforded by the interposition of the Speaker. But I admit to the full it would be dearly bought if the position of the Speaker were thereby to be jeopardized and placed in greater danger than it is now. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite are perfectly entitled to warn us on that ground if they see danger, because every Member of this House has been most anxious that the authority of the Chair should be maintained. But in what position is the Speaker placed under the present Rules? The Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman for Mid Lothian said, must decide upon a fact at present, and in the future he would have to give an opinion; but is it entirely a question of fact on which he is called upon to take action when he declares it to be the evident sense of the House that a subject has been adequately discussed? The Speaker has to give an opinion on that under the present Rules; and I think my right hon. Friend will admit that the Speaker has considerable discretion under the present Rules. It might be thought from some observations that have been made that the general sense of the House could be manifested by clamour, but that is not so. The Speaker considers all the circumstances of the case, and only when in his own judgment the moment has arrived at which he believes, as a matter of opinion—because he can have no possible means of ascertaining the fact that the House is opposed to further discussion—then he takes action. Suppose that under the present Rules, the Speaker,

having thought he knew what was the general sense of the House, found he was in error, and that a majority decided against him, which is a possibility, then it is the Speaker who has made the mistake. That is the present Rule under which the authority of the Chair is to be maintained. Under that Rule the Speaker is put in the position of taking the initiative, and of having a vote of the House taken to see whether he is right; and, if the Speaker has been wrong, he has destroyed his authority. But under the Rule now proposed it is not the Speaker, but it is a Member of this House who must take the initiative. He must obtain the consent of the Speaker; but the authority of the Speaker is not placed in so much peril as it is placed in under the existing Rule, under which he must act on his own initiative and take the full penalty should a Division hostile to him show that he has made a mistake. Does the House think seriously that the Rule with this protection can be liable to be much abused? I believe that the authority of the Chair would generally be used far more for the protection of the minority than in order to push Business rapidly through the House. But it is, of course, for the House to determine whether they consider there is a safeguard in this proviso which we have introduced. What are the alternatives? One is closure by a simple majority, and I do not think the majority of the House are in favour of such a proposal. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite would not be supported by a large portion of hon. Members on that side of the House in such a proposal; and I do not think it would be carried. I do not think they would consent to closure by a majority without the consent of the Speaker. Of course that is an issue upon which discussion, and possibly a Division, may take place, and it is a fair issue; but if the Speaker's authority is to be introduced, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that it is safer to introduce it by placing the initiative in the hands of a Member of the House, and a check in the hands of the Speaker; than to place the initiative in the hands of the Speaker, with a ratification on the part of the House. I hope I have at least put intelligibly what I consider to be the differences between the two plans which are before the House. I have dealt with the main points which

were urged by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Of course, a very different attitude was taken by the hon. Member for Cork, who disputes that we are likely to attain any success by passing new Rules of Procedure. He says:—"You have passed Rules of Procedure and they have not assisted you by one hour; they have not assisted you in any way, and you will find your proposed Rules will be as totally unsuccessful." I am not prepared to admit that past Rules have not attained a certain measure of success. I am not prepared to admit that we should at the present moment be discussing Rules of Procedure at all if it were not for the success of the Rules of Procedure introduced by the late Government. I cannot accept the general line of argument of the hon. Member for Cork that there is no possible advantage in these Rules; but I agree that under our democratic institutions there is an increasing necessity of our being able to grapple with the growing wants of the people. All that I admit; but at the same time we have seen that there have been abuses of the Forms of this House, which during past years have paralyzed us in the performance of our duties. Is it possible for anyone to look back at the history of the last seven years without recognizing that there has been a growing difficulty in the conduct of the Business of this House, not only in consequence of the growing needs, but also in consequence of the new methods of debate, and the new temper in which many Members have appreciated the Questions before us? It is necessary that we should look, and see how far we can lighten the burden that rests upon this House; but that cannot blind us to the fact that there has been a great abuse of Parliamentary forms, which were adapted to a different state of things. I agree with the hon. Member for Cork that we must adopt such methods of devolution in this House and out of this House as will increase our means of dealing with the work before us. There are schemes of local government which, by decentralizing, will lighten the work placed upon us, and the suggestions with regard to Private Bill Legislation will, if carried out, also be a step in the same direction. But this will not be enough. All parties are agreed on this—that it is desirable, and will be expedient and

wise to lighten the work of Parliament by confiding to County Local Authorities as much of the Business of the House as can safely be made over to them. But when the hon. Member for Cork seeks to draw certain inferences from the difficulties before us, and tells us in so many words that the burden of the Empire is more than one Parliament can bear, and there ought to be several, then we draw the line. We prefer by a resolute effort to attempt to cope with the difficulties before us, and to perform the work placed upon us—an effort in which I hope all quarters of the House will take part, and in which we have already been promised the co-operation of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. We will not in alarm attempt to solve our difficulties by breaking off a piece of our burden, and placing it upon another assembly.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): We have listened to an animated speech from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I am surprised to find that he, as an economist of the time of the House, and an experienced Parliamentary tactician, thinks he is going to shorten this debate by turning it into a Party controversy, ending with a denunciation of Home Rule. The tone of his speech was, I am bound to say, very different from that of the speech delivered by the Leader of the House, and by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at an earlier period of the evening. He spoke in an inflammatory and bitter tone. I do not propose to follow his example. I think it is better to apply ourselves to the subject which is before us for debate. We have been accustomed, during the past few days and weeks, to be kept pretty strictly to our texts. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a chartered libertine. [*Cries of "Oh!" and "Order!"*] He has thought fit to enter upon a Home Rule debate. [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*] I certainly shall not withdraw the words I have used—they are words which, to borrow the phrase of Lord Beaconsfield, have received the "meed of Parliamentary approbation." I shall ask leave, if I may be permitted by hon. Gentlemen opposite to turn away from Home Rule, and go back to the Procedure of the House, which is the subject actually before us. As compared with hon. Gen-

flemen opposite, we, at all events, have one advantage. We hold on the subject of Procedure and on the closure the same opinions now, when in Opposition, that we held when in Office. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, no doubt, is an exception to the other Members of the Government, who have completely changed their opinions on this subject. But I make no complaint of hon. Members opposite on this head. The truth is, you ought never to make the process of conversion too difficult for hon. Gentlemen opposite. If you are assured of the sincerity of their repentance you ought gladly to accept their contrition. The fact is, this question of closure has run the regular course of all great reforms. It was proposed by the Liberal Party, who were denounced by hon. Members opposite as enemies of their country, who were going to ruin the country and to destroy Parliament. A few months or years pass, and the Conservative Party adopt it as the salvation of the country. We are used to that kind of thing; it has happened in the case of greater questions before, and it will happen again very soon with respect to a still greater question. It is the regular law of political nature, and you fight against it in vain. Gentlemen opposite are now enthusiastic supporters of the closure. I am very glad of it; I think that perhaps, since their meeting to-day, they believe they are the authors of it. I suppose we shall hear no more—for a short time, at any rate—of those passionate demands for the rights of minorities and vehement denunciations of the tyranny of the majority which we listened to so long, and which wasted so much Parliamentary time. I have always supported the closure pure and simple—by a simple majority, and not by proportional numbers such as a two-thirds majority, which used to be the great panacea of the Conservative Party and of some Gentleman on this side. They combined and made our life rather uneasy, but if you have only patience and wait, Conservatives and Dissident Liberals will become converted, and return to the faith in closure pure and simple. That is something to have gained at all events. A very distinguished personage, whom we miss from among us now and who formerly occupied the seat of the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, proclaimed the closure by a simple majority, both at Dartford and Bradford, and I am sorry that he is not hereto support us to-night. Now, our proposals—I speak of the proposals which I was the instrument of laying before the Committee upstairs—were drawn up at Devonshire House like many other famous agreements. I had then the advantage of the assistance of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). That scheme, as regarded closure, was for closure by simple majority without the intervention of the Speaker, and I listened with extraordinary surprise to the impassioned argument of my right hon. Friend opposite as to that intervention, because in those former proposals it was agreed that it was an entire mistake to introduce the Speaker into the matter of the closure at all. Although the Committee altered our proposals in other respects—and in important respects, in which I do not agree with them—one thing on which they did agree with the proposals was, that it was an entire mistake to allow the Speaker to have anything to do with it. That was the conclusion arrived at by the strongest Committee that ever sat upon the subject. What is the use of appointing such a Committee and then paying no regard to its opinion? Then, again, I say without fear of contradiction, in the presence of every Member of that Committee, that in their opinion far the most important part of the whole recommendations with respect to Procedure was the scheme of sending the whole Committee work upon Bills to a Standing Committee; and we also proposed to send the Estimates out of this House, so that the work for the House should be set free for the discussion of Second Readings and Resolutions. By doing so we should have relieved the House of its detailed technical labour, and confined its attention to its proper and principal work—the discussion of the great principles affecting the Government of this country. That was the scheme laid before Parliament. We thought the idea of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland of sending every Bill to a Committee was an excellent one, and we adopted it. Whatever method you take of saving the time of the House, if you

leave the Estimates to be discussed bit by bit in a Committee of the Whole House, you will never gain that freedom for the House which is desired. Then as regards the closure, what have they done? We proposed a closure which was to operate twice a-day. There was to be a morning sitting and evening sitting, and we wanted to secure that you should come to issue at least twice in the day on the Question before the House. That was proposed because we felt the great importance of the House having Notice and not being taken by surprise in the exercise of this power. There was great opposition in Committee to using this power in the early sitting. I withdrew that part of the proposal and the Committee agreed that the closure was to be applied at the sitting of the House in the evening. When it was to be put in force there would be Notice to everybody, but the Committee limited the closure to the First and Second Orders of the Day, and very unfortunately, I think, required a majority of two to one. We would have nothing to do with it on these conditions; but I was in a wretched minority and had the great majority of the Committee against me. I am still of opinion that whatever you do in this matter of the closure, the one thing you must guard against is surprise. The House ought to have a fair Notice of what it was to do. We thought, in our original proposal of 1882, to obtain a certain security by the largeness of the quorum. An attendance of 200 was required. But it failed in this respect—you can always get 200 for a great Party fight, but that it is not for such a purpose that you require the closure exclusively or mainly. Anyone who has had to do with the conduct of a great Department knows what the country suffers from our inability to pass short Bills. I have been often asked about passing a short Bill, and I have said it was as difficult to pass a short as a long Bill. Therefore, even with a much less quorum than 200 or 250 Members, if you have fair Notice in the closure may be very useful. But what has the Government done with respect to it? They have made no alteration in that proposal against which they struggled so hard in 1882, except as to the position of the Speaker. The Chancellor of the Exchequer entirely misunderstood our position on that point, and it is a most

material point in the consideration of the matter. When the Speaker was originally introduced into this question of the closure, it was thought by Her Majesty's Government of 1882 that it would reconcile those who were altogether opposed to the closure, to feel that it was to be in the hands of a perfectly impartial and independent authority, the Speaker. That was the reason why it was given to the Speaker. Now, if you want to give confidence to the minority, you must make the authority an undivided one, because the moment you divide the authority you divide the responsibility. The consequence was, that we felt we were giving no security at all if we divided the authority of the Speaker with anybody else. But what was the view at that time of those Gentlemen who are so afraid of being overborne by a majority? We said, "You are safe in the hands of the Speaker." What was the answer given by hon. Gentlemen opposite? I am not using it as a taunt or a recrimination, but as a matter which throws a very important light upon what is a far more serious feature in the case. I might give the opinion of 100 Gentlemen on the other side, but I will content myself with giving that of two distinguished Members of the present Cabinet. I will take first the Gentleman who was put forward to move the main Resolution, the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland, then Mr. Gibson. Mr. Gibson said he declined to believe that the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees would never be liable to political influences; and he was pretty confident that it would be impossible for the two officers of the House to be above suspicion if the closure were to be enforced by a bare majority. The First Lord of the Admiralty has expressed the same opinion, that the operation of the closure by a bare majority would convert the Speaker into a partizan. These were the views then entertained by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and no doubt sincerely. What has been their experience since? Except on one occasion, a few days ago, the only time the closure has been applied, as far as I know, was on February 20, 1885. The Speaker then declared that it appeared to him that the subject had been adequately discussed, and that it was the evident sense of the House that the Question should be put.

He so informed the House, and the matter was put to the vote. I have no wish to raise any Party feeling, and I shall be simply stating a fact when I remind the House that the Speaker, having declared that opinion, it was barely sustained. The greater part of the Opposition then walked out of the House. Several distinguished Members of the Party opposite, some of whom are Members of the present Cabinet, voted against the Motion. There were 46 in the minority, a great part of whom were Members of the Conservative Opposition, and it was with great difficulty that 207 Members—200 being necessary—could be mustered to apply the Rule. No doubt, that led to the Rule being less employed than it might have been. Our view, in proposing that the Speaker should be made the sole authority in the matter, was to get rid altogether of the idea of his co-operation with any Party in this House. Accordingly, Sir, we relied upon your independent judgment when the closure was applied, and we knew you would apply it independently and impartially. But has the action of the Chair in the matter produced the desired effect on the public mind even under the present Rule? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has argued that the proposal of the Government is not more open to objection than the existing Rule. But I contend that the present Rule is open to great objection and great misinterpretation; and, therefore, we are endeavouring to keep the Speaker independent. We do not propose to introduce the Speaker as in the existing Rule, and still less do we propose to introduce him as in the proposed new Rules. I say that, not even under the present system, in which the Speaker acts as a wholly independent authority, having nothing to do with any Party in the House, does he keep clear of suspicion. What happened the other day when the closure was applied? *The Times*, a journal not unfavourable to Gentlemen opposite or to the closure, in referring, on February 19, to the application of the closure the other day, used these words—"The complete success of the operation which Mr. W. H. Smith undertook with the assistance of the Chair," against a "beaten minority." Is that a position in which you desire your Speaker to be presented? I feel quite sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not desire

that that should be the position in which the Chair of this House should be placed on an occasion of this important character. If this happens, then, when the Speaker is placed in a position to exercise an entirely independent judgment, will you improve matters by placing him in the position of a consenting or a dissenting party to the demand of some Member of the House? Moreover, this Rule is by no means clear in its meaning. It does not state how the consent of the Speaker is to be asked, whether in private by an hon. Member or openly in the House. Then, again as, to the request to be made to the Speaker, I venture to say that no man could make it to him with any expectation that consent would be given to him, except he represented a majority in the House; and, therefore, the only person under this Rule to whom the Speaker ever could or would give his consent was the Government Whip. Why should the Speaker give consent to persons whom he knows will be immediately afterwards beaten or placed in a minority, and thus practically waste the time of the House? By this hypothesis, therefore, the consent of the Speaker would only be given to the majority. Other people may apply to the Speaker, but, knowing the condition of Parties in this House, he will say—"No; I will not give you the permission for which you ask." Then the Speaker will be in the position in which he is described as being in *The Times*. The Speaker will be constantly represented as assisting the Representatives of the majority, and it is most undesirable that that should be possible. Then, by this Rule you will destroy the responsibility of both Parties. Under the present Rule the responsibility is with the Speaker; but if we allow him to exercise it at the request of the Government we diminish his responsibility, and also that of the Government, and the Government would say—"You cannot say we are wrong in demanding the closure, as we were supported by the Speaker;" and the Speaker would say—"You cannot blame me, because the Government demanded it." Between the two we destroy all responsibility, and a more utter and entire destruction of all the chances which a minority might otherwise possess I cannot conceive. Replying to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I tell him that I am for the closure pure and simple, without the interference of the Speaker. If you put the responsi-

bility in the right quarter you have nothing to fear. People in a minority should act as if one day they would be in a majority, and people in a majority should act as if one day they would be in a minority; and I advise hon. Gentlemen opposite to think of that. When the Conservative Party acted in all those panic terrors in 1882, they seemed to think they were always going to be in a minority, and that they ought to be taken care of. Well, they were mistaken in thinking they were always going to be in a minority; they are in a majority now. [*Laughter, and cries of "No!"*] Well, yes—at least of a sort. But it is a mistake, too, to think that they are always going to be in a majority, and I would advise them to consider the question with respect to those contingencies. I am not the least afraid, whatever minority I may find myself in, of this power of the closure. I do not want to be protected by any one, by two-thirds majority, or the Chair, or anybody else. I know there is protection which is quite sufficient—the public opinion of this country. If I were one of a majority, there is nothing which I should fear so much as a misuse of this power; and if hon. Members opposite were to abuse this power I should be delighted, because I should know that we should very soon get rid of them. I, therefore, am not the least afraid, and I do not want all these wretched safeguards. It is one of the weaknesses of the Party which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has joined that when they have laid down a principle they must always surround it by safeguards, which weaken and nullify it. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman has still enough of the old stuff left in him to enable him to cast himself free of this superstition. If any Party were ever to use this power tyrannically they would suffer for it. Should they close our mouths in this House there are other places where to speak. A tyrannical exercise of this right will only drive discussion from the floor of this House into the country, and the House of Commons will sink to the level of an inferior vestry under the absurdity of its own Rule. This consideration will always be a check upon the abuse of the closure; and I hope that under the exercise of sound commonsense, and those principles of freedom of debate and liberty to which we have been accustomed, the House

may still continue to be the arena of debate of a free people. I have lived a goodish time in minorities and majorities, and I do not think it makes much difference whether we are in a majority or in a minority; it depends very much on whether the opinions we hold commend themselves to the majority of the country or not. These panic fears about the closure are absurd. If by the improper abuse of the power anything is closed it will be the House of Commons. You may depend upon it that is a consideration which will not be without influence upon the Government. Hon. Members opposite have no doubt at present that they are always going to be in a majority, and they think that they are introducing a Rule to suit that situation. They remind me of the Eton boy—

"Alas! regardless of their doom
The little victims play,
No sense have they of ills to come,
No cares beyond to-day."

I should strongly advise them in dealing with this question to look at the possibilities of the future, and to consider how this thing may bear, not only upon their present, but upon their future position. I shall not detain the House any longer. We cannot quarrel with the closure, because it is ours. You have altered nothing except the position of the Speaker. As regards the position of the Speaker, I have read to you what your view was then. Our experience has led us to conclude that it was a mistake to introduce the Speaker at all, even as we introduced him. But your proposal is more dangerous still, and I think the House will be much better advised if it excludes the Speaker from the closure. I do not think that in that strong Committee there was a single dissentient opinion when we came to that conclusion. We agreed that it should be proposed independently to the House and voted upon by the House. Why should you throw over the unanimous conclusion of the Committee? For my part, I should adhere to the Resolution if you strike the Speaker out of it altogether. I am perfectly willing to rely upon the public opinion of the House and the country to prevent the abuse of the closure. I should be willing to diminish rather than to increase the quorums. I think the quorums much too large. I would leave the House like any other Assembly, and I do not know that other Assemblies require the

intervention of the Speaker. We are too timid, I think. To introduce the Speaker to say whether the matter is or is not fit for decision is most objectionable. It is the same with regard to adjournment. You expose him needlessly. He would be violently attacked by those to whom he would refuse it, and you would greatly destroy the authority of the Chair. Much better leave the responsibility with the majority, who will be responsible to the House and the country. Under these circumstances you can safely accept this Rule, and disregard all the fears entertained upon the subject; and I am satisfied if this power is reasonably and fairly used it will be greatly to the advantage of the House and the country.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) appears to have forgotten part, at least, of the good advice which his Leader gave earlier in the evening. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) laid stress upon the fact that the Government need not expect anything of the nature of Party opposition to these Rules; but certainly at the beginning of his speech the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) seemed to be a little obivious of that part of his Leader's observations. But although he did not remember that we were not to be treated to any Party re-creation, he did not forget that we had been promised a sporadic discussion. I think we may fairly say that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) went up and down and round about the question until we hardly knew which was the beginning of his speech and which the end. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken very strongly against the present proposals of the Government, and he has endeavoured to enlist as an advocate against the proposal now before the House a speech made by Lord Ashbourne five years ago against the proposals of the then Government, which were supported by the right hon. Gentleman himself, upon whom Lord Ashbourne's oratory seemed to produce very little effect at the time it was delivered. I must point out that the arguments which Lord Ashbourne used were not directed against the proposal which is now put forward, but against

the proposal which the right hon. Gentleman then saw no reason to condemn, and which the Government now propose to supersede by the very proposal before the House. Now, I observe that, in point of fact, there are three main questions which seem to run through the oratory of right hon. Gentlemen opposite in this discussion. One of them has reference to the devolution of the Business of the House; another of them has reference to the position of the Chair; and the third of them—though I do not think it is at all germane to the subject—has reference to the recent ruling of Mr. Speaker upon the question of Notice being given of matters to be discussed in the House. I should like to dispose of the last of these questions first, because the most extraordinary bugbears and imaginary horrors have been conjured up with respect to it. Now, it is not only an obvious and constantly recognized Rule of this House that we are not to anticipate the discussion of any question; but it appears to me to be essential and rudimentary in all debate whatever. I do not suppose that if the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) assisted at the deliberations of a band of Choctaws they would allow to be discussed beforehand anything that had been set down for their palaver on the next day. [Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT dissented.] Then I must leave the right hon. Gentleman to the practices of his friends and prototypes, and appeal to those of more civilized societies. Debate would become absolutely impossible if, when Notice has been given that a particular question is to be discussed on a particular day, it should be possible to anticipate that discussion by taking it on another day when, perhaps, Members interested in the subject might not be here to take part in the debate. In fact, we might as well burn our Order Book and get rid of all the Forms of Parliament if our proceedings are to be allowed to degenerate into such confusion. Passing from that, I should like to say a word or two with regard to the position of the Government upon the question of closure. It is no secret that the Conservative Party have not been enthusiastic supporters of the clôture. [*A laugh.*] That is no secret. Some of us have had very grave and serious objections, both constitutionally and politically, to the application of the clôture to the debates of

this House; but those objections were mainly urged at a time when the question was one absolutely new to Parliament, without precedent, and of which we had no experience. I claim for this side of the House that we may be allowed to profit by experience. We have had four years' experience of the system which was introduced in 1882 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), with the entire concurrence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) and his Colleagues, and I am bound to confess that that system does not appear to have operated as that serious infringement of Parliamentary liberties which some of us feared it would prove. The Conservative Party has never been a reactionary Party. We leave re-action for right hon. Gentlemen opposite; they are the people who are always trying to undo the achievements of their opponents. The Conservative Party endeavours always to make the best of things as they are, not to rip open old sores, or go back to an earlier state of things. We endeavour to absorb into the Constitution of this country all the new Rules which have been engrafted upon it by new legislation; and I think it is open for us to say that the result of four years' experience has convinced us that there was probably insufficient ground for our fears with regard to the *clôture*. But we think that in the system introduced four years ago there is one very remarkable and conspicuous defect. We think that the position assigned to the Speaker by the Rule for which the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) is responsible is not a position which has been advantageous to the Chair, and we think it has, in a great degree, prevented the Rule from being generally operative. Her Majesty's Government have determined that they will, on this occasion, do their best to make the Rule more effective and more operative. The right hon. Gentleman has taunted us with voting in the Committee upstairs in favour of a two-thirds majority, and that after that we should propose the Resolution as it now stands with regard to the invocation of the Speaker. The right hon. Gentleman is very proud of the fact that he is an advocate of the *clôture* by a pure majority without bringing the Speaker into

the question at all. Better than that is the two-thirds majority, and better than the two-thirds majority, in my opinion, is the scheme now propounded by Her Majesty's Government, who have considered the feelings of those who, like the right hon. Gentleman, are unwilling to set up a new-fangled form of majority in this House. The old Rule embodies the principle of the majority deciding the question, and we have respected that principle. It is retained in our proposal, and in that respect I think we may claim the assent of the right hon. Gentleman that it is preferable to a two-thirds majority. So far, it appears, we are agreed; but we differ from the right hon. Gentleman in this—that we do not approve of a majority pure and simple being able to decide the question in this House. I was rather surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman, with that magnificent temerity with which he sometimes approaches public questions, declaring himself in favour of a majority pure and simple deciding questions of this sort. How many hon. Members of this House does the right hon. Gentleman think he would be able to take with him into the Lobby on such a proposition? How many does he think he would be able to take with him—would be able to detach—from the Government side of the House?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Six months hence.

MR. RAIKES: I will not speak of six months hence, because I do not know what fresh change may have taken place in the right hon. Gentleman's views within that time. But this I think I may say. The right hon. Gentleman must have been struck when the Chancellor of the Exchequer put it to him how many supporters would he be likely to find on his own side of the House below the Gangway? Is he going to lead into action the forlorn hope sitting on the Benches behind him? Does he suppose that the votes that he will be able to poll out of the Benches behind that upon which he sits will be such as to justify a Minister in making the proposal that he suggests? The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that if he were sitting upon this side of the Table he would no sooner think of proposing in a matter of this kind to take the decision of the majority pure and simple than he would propose to go to

War with all the Powers of Europe combined. He knows perfectly well that if he were here and made a proposal of that kind, the defeat which would be given to a proposal of that sort would be overwhelming, and would be sufficient, at all events, to teach him a lesson which he does not seem to have learned at the present moment. I think I have shown how this Resolution is put forward in its present form. We believe it to be better, on Constitutional grounds, than a two-thirds majority. We believe it better and more acceptable to the House of Commons, and more certain to preserve the privileges of the minorities, than a majority pure and simple; and we believe that on both these points we shall find a considerable majority of the House in favour of it. Then, having shown how this presented itself to the minds of those who sat on the Committee to which such frequent reference has been made, I should like to say one or two words with regard to the difference in the position of the Speaker under this Resolution as compared with the existing arrangement. The right hon. Gentleman has been pleased to make rather merry with regard to the difficulties of the Speaker, in whose ear the Whips of the Party will always be whispering respecting his duty in this matter. Both the right hon. Gentleman and the late Prime Minister (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) have been at great pains in their endeavour to prove that the position of the Speaker under this new Rule will be more embarrassing than his position under the old Rule. Well, I think that a more baseless or unfounded invention was never put forward in this House. I think when you consider that at the present moment the closure has only been put in force on one occasion previous to last week during four years, and that on that occasion the Speaker's initiative was supported by only 207 against 49, we have the most obvious reason why the present Rule is inoperative, because no Speaker is likely to assume the initiative again, under the circumstances, unless in the face of extreme urgency. [Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT here made some observation across the Table.] I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman will make it convenient to speak at another time, and not be continually interrupting me. As the proposition now stands, it appears

to me that it will meet the whole difficulty. The Speaker under this Rule in future, instead of appearing to assume the initiative in putting down a minority, will appear to the House as the person who is the guardian of the rights of the minority. The Speaker is called upon by the Leader of the House, or by the Member in charge of some Bill, who believes he has the requisite majority to carry through the House a Motion for closing the debate. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman is going away. It is for the Speaker, under these circumstances, to say whether or not he thinks that the application for the *clôture* may be granted—that is to say, he is introduced between the minority and the Government as a check on the Government; and I think it would be felt that his action, to which the minority must look, is protecting their rights and liberties against the influence of the majority. Instead, therefore, of putting the Speaker in a position, painful, invidious, and embarrassing, it seems to me that by this proposal he is restored to his position of moderator of the debates and guardian and champion of the rights of minorities. It seems to me that the question is one that does not bear much argument. It may be several years since the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) has found it necessary to make any proposal of an interesting character to any interesting person of the other sex. But if his argument is good for anything, the position of the lady in these circumstances would be less embarrassing if it lay with her to make the proposal herself. According to the right hon. Gentleman, the responsibility of the lady is much greater if she is merely to say "Yes" or "No" when addressed with all the force and eloquence which so distinguished a person would use in submitting his proposal to her. Is the lady in these circumstances to be told that her position would be far easier if she herself took the initiative, and got up and made the overture herself to the right hon. Gentleman? The right hon. Gentleman has told us that he does not think the present Administration will last very long, and that the time will come when Gentlemen who sit on this side of the House will sit on the other. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman will then be in this House,

or, if he is, on which side he will sit. But, if he happens to sit on this (the Ministerial) side of the House, I can assure him that the minority will be very greatly in need of protection. I confess I doubt whether any man in this House would regard with equanimity the spectacle of the right hon. Gentleman returning to power, flushed with a triumphant majority, and conducting the affairs of the Government in the tone and spirit in which he commenced his speech this evening. I think the right hon. Gentleman had himself a little suspicion of that, because he said the only thing he would be afraid of was that he should misuse his powers; and I can assure him that that is a fear which will be very generally shared by the House. The right hon. Gentleman was very strong indeed as to the duty of the House and the Government in respect of the decision of the Committee upstairs. I should like the House to recall to its mind the very curious *finale* to the proceedings of that Committee upstairs. The right hon. Gentleman has told us to-night what we did not know before—namely, that the programme which he submitted to the Committee had been previously settled by a Committee which met at Devonshire House. I was not aware that that was known before. I never heard of it while the Committee was sitting.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: It was mentioned in this House the other night.

MR. RAIKES: I was not here. I never heard of it before. We certainly never heard it in the Committee upstairs. The right hon. Gentleman, at the end of his speech, told us that it was a shocking and scandalous thing that we should treat lightly the recommendations of the Committee which sat upstairs. But what did the right hon. Gentleman himself do in that Committee? He resigned—we had a Ministerial crisis that was chronic. He caused the adjournment from day to day, and we were frequently in doubt as to whether we should resume our consideration of the Resolutions or not, and whether we should ever arrive at a conclusion on the matter. Finally, the right hon. Gentleman, when we had arrived at a conclusion on the Clôture Resolution, flung up his brief and declined to take any further interest in the proceedings.

Mr. Raikes

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Really, Sir, there must be a limit to misstatement. What power had I to adjourn the Committee? The noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) was Chairman of that Committee, and he alone had the power to decide when it should sit and when it should not.

MR. RAIKES: Unquestionably, the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale was the formal organ in deciding the question of adjournment; but the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) must remember that it was in consequence of the extraordinary petulance, if I may say so, displayed by the Representative of the Government on that Committee, that our proceedings were constantly interrupted, and we never knew on a particular day whether the proceedings of the Committee were to be carried on or not. I think if the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) were here, he would thoroughly corroborate what I am saying. This point, at least, the right hon. Gentleman will not contravene—

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do—every word of it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. RAIKES: I think the course which is now being taken by the right hon. Gentleman must show that this House would require some protection when the right hon. Gentleman is in possession of greater power. I never knew a greater breach either of the Rules of Debate, or of the ordinary courtesies of debate, than the continual interruptions and constant contradictions of the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman appeals to me and says—"At all events, what I have said the right hon. Gentleman cannot contravene." I say I contravene every word of it.

MR. RAIKES: The right hon. Gentleman has entirely misunderstood me. I said—"This point, at least, the right hon. Gentleman will not contravene, that"—

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do contravene it.

MR. RAIKES: This is an illustration of the state of mind to which the right hon. Gentleman can bring himself. I never remember a more extraordinary display in this House. I was going to say,

and I am going to say, what is the point that I am sure he will not contravene; but he will not let me finish my sentence; he again interrupts me before he knows what I am going to say. I wish to say—and this is the point on which I hope I shall not be interrupted again by the right hon. Gentleman—that he will not deny this—that when the Committee had arrived at the Resolution which it appears now the House ought particularly to respect, he disclaimed any further responsibility for the proceedings of the Committee.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I contravene that.

MR. RAIKES: Does the right hon. Gentleman contravene that? Then all I can say is, that I appeal with confidence to every other man who sat on that Committee as to the painful impression produced on the minds of Members of the Committee by the course adopted by the right hon. Gentleman. I do not, however, particularly care whether the right hon. Gentleman's recollection of these matters tallies with mine or not. All I can say is this—and I put it to the right hon. Gentleman without the slightest doubt or hesitation—that it is not for the right hon. Gentleman, having taken the line he did take then, to tell the House that they are bound by the decision of the Committee. The right hon. Gentleman is a great lover of devolution. Well, we have heard a great deal about devolution, and it is well to point out to the House what was the machinery by which it was proposed to bring it about. It was actually proposed, and actually carried in the Committee that sat upstairs, that this devolution was to consist of breaking up the House of Commons into four parts; that these four bodies were to supersede the action of the House itself on two days of the week until 9 o'clock; and that then the Speaker was to take the Chair and Questions were to be put, and Public Business was to be taken at that hour. It seemed to me that a proposition of such limitless absurdity was never propounded, and I am certain any Government that attempted to father such a scheme would be laughed out of the House, and that any House that passed it would become the laughing-stock of Europe. I endeavoured to bring about an arrangement by which the House would meet at some ordinary

time, and then break up into several Bureaux. The House was to sit here through Thursday and Friday afternoons in four Bureaux, and then make up a miserable meeting at 9 o'clock for the transaction of the Business of the nation. I confess the Government appear to me to have earned the gratitude of this House in having refused to encumber the Paper of Proceedings by reviving that ridiculous proposal. I am quite sure that whatever form devolution is to take it will never take the form that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) at that time was anxious to press on the House. I do not myself think that this House is ripe for the consideration, on an extended scale, of a scheme of devolution. I think that perhaps the time may come when it would be found possible to create a system by which Bills generally could be discussed upstairs, and when Committee of the Whole House was to come to an end. But that will not be because the House has failed to do its duty, but because it is overburdened with work. It seems to me that of all the valuable features of our Parliamentary institution, the most valuable is Committee of the Whole House. I do not think that any other part of our Business so favourably represents the business qualities of the British race as the stage of Committee of the Whole House; and I think it would be an evil day for this country whenever the discussion of the details of important matters was taken away from the Whole House sitting in Committee. The most useful discussions take place there, and it will be, as I say, an evil day when, for free and fair and open discussion downstairs, is substituted that inferior sort of sifting which can be given to a measure in one of those microcosmic bodies which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) is pleased to call miniatures of this House. I do not wish to detain the House any further upon this question. I think it has not been very difficult to show to the House how exceedingly baseless and untrustworthy were the criticisms bestowed on this subject by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt); but then I think the right hon. Gentleman was in this difficulty. He was fettered from offering any effective opposition to the proposals, because they

were based upon those of his own Government. I most earnestly hope that the example of the right hon. Gentleman will not be followed; but that criticisms will be made rather in the spirit of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). That hon. Member's criticisms were perfectly fair and tinged with no Party acrimony, and not intruded to embarrass or confuse the mind of the House. I feel quite sure that if hon. Gentlemen generally will take their model from below, rather than above, the Gangway on the other side, they will be more likely to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to a matter that is, no doubt, of first importance, if Public Business is to be transacted in this country, and which it is, above all things, necessary should be brought to a conclusion, not merely with an eye to the acceleration of the Public Business, but to the maintenance of the ancient liberties and privileges of this House.

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Sir Lyon Playfair.)*

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882 (DOLLAR INSTITUTION).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

MR. A. L. BROWN (Hawick, &c.): Sir, I am sorry to ask the indulgence of the House at this late hour; but as the scheme of the Commissioners with reference to this Institution will become law if it is not challenged, I feel that there is no alternative for me but to make the Motion standing in my name. My first objection is that elementary education will be entirely removed from this school by the scheme of the Commissioners, so that the poor of the parish of Dollar will be virtually excluded from the school that was left to them. My second objection is, that the people of Dollar have no direct representation. Our complaint was formerly that the representation was not sufficiently direct, and we complain now that we have no direct representation at all. The will of the founder, John

MacNab, shows that the money was left entirely for the benefit of the poor of the parish of Dollar. But the Dollar Institution has not been such a success as it might have been, because the representation has not been sufficiently direct, and, as I have said, by the scheme of the Commissioners it is still less so. Under the old system there was a good elementary school and a good secondary school. Under the present scheme only four of the managers are to be resident in the parish of Dollar, and the other seven are to be non-resident. The scheme turns the school entirely into a secondary school, whereas the money was left entirely for the education of the poor children of the parish. From this school all children below the Fifth Standard are to be excluded, and I say that anyone who is familiar with the condition of the working classes will know that very few children of the working classes can enter the school under such conditions. This is the point to which I wish particularly to call the attention of the House. The Commissioners propose that school fees should be paid not exceeding 12s. a-year, in order to qualify this arrangement. There are 157 children of working men attending the school, and if 12s. is paid for each of them the expenditure under the head of fees will amount to £94 a-year. Now, the income of the Charity amounts to £3,000, and of that the working men of the parish will get only the small sum I have named. I trust the House will hesitate before they approve this scheme. If the scheme were carried it will oblige the School Board to put up a new school, and for this the working men will be rated over and above what they now have to pay. At present there are in this school 546 children on the roll, with an average attendance of 490, which, if the elementary school is removed, will be very largely reduced. It is, in my opinion, a great pity that the children of the middle class were ever admitted to this school at all. They were admitted at first as a privilege, and now, like cuckoos, they are driving the poorer children out of the nest. These, Sir, are the reasons why we object to the scheme of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, under which the working men of the parish will have no direct representation on the

Board, and for those reasons I ask the House not to give its assent to the scheme.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): Sir, I shall make very few observations in seconding the Motion of my hon. Friend. In this school I believe there are under 600 pupils. The school has accommodation for 1,600; but it is proposed to carry over the primary education from that school, and to compel the erection in the parish of a board school. I may mention that there was a parish school in the place; but this, on the ground that ample accommodation existed in the parish, was, on the recommendation of the Scotch Education Board, discontinued. My hon. Friend has stated the objections which exist to the scheme of the Educational Endowments Commission in the present case, in which I entirely agree. I have no doubt we shall receive the same answer to our objections as it is usual to give when these schemes are called in question. We are always told that it is the effort of the Commissioners to open up a road from the board school to the University for the children of the poorest classes of the population. When the Educational Endowments Bill was before the House of Commons, my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) and other Scotch Members, including myself, did our utmost to safeguard the interests of free primary education in the same way as the provisions of other charitable foundations were safeguarded, and our fear has always been that what was originally intended by the founders for primary education might be diverted to secondary education. That, Sir, is what has taken place in the present instance. The Educational Endowments Commissioners have diverted all but about £98 per annum to secondary education out of an income of £3,000. No doubt we shall be told that provision would be made for the further education of the poor by bursaries and such means; but the poor themselves do not appreciate that form of looking after their interests. We know that while the children of the rich are able to go forward to the Universities and avail themselves of such educational advantages the children of the poor who are obliged to go early to labour will not be able to avail themselves of secondary educational endowments; and it is, therefore, the more important that they shall have the full

benefit of all the endowments for primary education that have been left to them. I shall not at this late hour say more in support of the Motion of my hon. Friend, which I cordially second.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her consent from Section 22 of Scheme 88 of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, under 'The Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882.'"—(Mr. A. L. Brown.)

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I shall not detain the House more than a few moments in defending this scheme of the Commissioners, which has already been defended by my Predecessors, and which, but for political events which have taken place, would long ere this have become law. The first portion of the attack of the hon. Member for Hawick was upon that part of the scheme which relates to the Governing Body; but, Sir, I do think that, as a matter of fact, the section which he desires to leave out has not much to do with the Governing Body. But the real objection has been stated by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), and it turns on the contention that the funds have been diverted from the class who were intended to be benefited by them. Now, I do not think that the facts have been accurately stated. In the first place, Sir, the poor will not be damaged by the scheme of the Commissioners. They get their education free now, and if the scheme of the Commissioners be passed they will continue to get their education free hereafter; so that nothing has really been taken from them. It is true that when the scheme is passed there will be a small charge of a little more than 2½*d.* in the pound cast upon the rates in order to make up that portion of the funds diverted to secondary education. In looking at these questions the points to be considered are—first, whether the Endowment Commissioners are acting in accordance with their duty in framing their scheme; and, secondly, whether the educational benefits of the classes intended have been preserved? Well, Sir, upon the first point I cannot conceive that any doubt should exist. When the Charity Commissioners were instituted it was for the express purpose of preventing money which now

goes to save rates from being used for other purposes than was intended. The Dollar Scheme throws on the ratepayers of the district some of that charge which the ratepayers of every other district have to pay; under the scheme the ratepayers will simply have to bear part of the expense of public education, which is borne by the ratepayers elsewhere. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says that the poor have a very small enjoyment of secondary education; but one merit of this scheme is to put the free education of his children within the reach of every poor man—the very greatest boon, in my opinion, that can be conferred upon the working classes. For these reasons I support the scheme of the Commissioners, which, I believe, carries out the object we have all in view, of giving free education to poor children throughout the country.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): Sir, as I have the honour of representing the constituency in which Dollar Institution is situated, I think it only right that I should say a few words on this subject. It is quite true, as my hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs has said, that there have been differences of opinion in regard to this scheme in the locality; and it is further true that, while I regret that such differences of opinion should exist, I am myself unable to support the view so well stated by my hon. Friend. On the merits of this question I am sure that the House would not desire me to speak at any length to-night, having regard to the lateness of the hour; but I may say that if the real effect of the scheme had been to deprive the poor of anything—if it had, in the slightest degree, interfered with the gratuitous education of the poor, the scheme would have found no more strenuous opponent than myself. If there is one thing more than another which I would always protest against, it is the transfer to the rich or well-to-do classes of anything that is bequeathed for the benefit of the poor. In times past an arrangement was made under which all the poor of Dollar have received gratuitous education. Well, Sir, the education so given has been of enormous benefit to the locality; and, first, by gratuitous primary education, and, secondly, by gratuitous secondary education, many have been able to raise themselves from the humblest grades to

positions of influence and honour in various departments of the public service and in other walks of life. But we know that educational endowments require to be reconsidered from time to time, and this one has certainly been most carefully considered by the Commissioners. I would point out that it is not one of the functions of this House to amend a scheme; we can amend a Bill, but here the question is substantially one of acceptance or rejection; and my opinion, in the present instance, is that the latter alternative would involve a grave misfortune to this institution and all who are interested in it. What has been done is this—inasmuch as it was thought by the Commissioners, after full inquiry, that there was not accommodation in the existing building for both the secondary and primary scholars, they propose to provide for the gratuitous primary education of the children of the poor in a board school to be built, and to reserve the present building for those receiving secondary education. But the poor children of the parish will have the opportunity in the future, as in the past, and, I hope, more than in the past, of rising from humble to superior grades, by means of gratuitous education. I hope, also, that under this scheme the institution will be so adapted to the requirements and ideas of modern times that it will continue to hold the high place which it has hitherto done, and does now, amongst the educational establishments of the country. I may add that the scheme was most carefully considered and passed by the Scotch Committee of Council on Education. For these reasons I feel unable to support the Motion of my hon. Friend.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I shall be very brief in the few words I desire to say on this question before we go to a Division. I desire to point out that in dealing with this scheme of the Educational Endowments Commissioners we have raised the question which we have so often debated in this House—namely, the diversion of funds from the use of the poorer to that of the richer classes—from the purposes of primary education to the purposes of secondary education. That point cannot, in my opinion, be put too strongly before the House, and it is upon that we shall divide to-night. My hon. Friend the Member for Hawick (Mr. A. L. Brown)

has shown that of this endowment, amounting to upwards of £3,000 a-year, practically little more than £100 a-year is given for purposes to which the endowment was originally intended to apply. That was the statement of my hon. Friend in making this Motion, and it has not been contravened in any way. The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), after saying that the poor of Dollar are in no way damaged by this scheme, went on to state that the only difference to the poor is that, instead of having, as heretofore, their whole education free—the school buildings, management, and masterships free—they will have to build a new school entirely for elementary education. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has also stated the same thing, putting very clearly the difference between sums given to primary and secondary education. The scheme of the Commissioners is just a repetition of what we have so long contended against, although not in so aggravated a form. Although the opposition which has been raised to these schemes in the House of Commons has always been made at a late hour, and in consequence has received but a brief consideration at the hands of hon. Members, still I am glad to see that it has had some effect. And I hope my hon. Friend's work in connection with the Dollar Institution will bear some fruit in future, even if he is not now successful as regards the present scheme.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to add a few words in support of the Motion of my hon. Friend. At the present time there are in the school 310 scholars entirely free, the average cost being 52s. per head; under the new scheme there will be 159 scholars, at the cost of 12s. per head, representing an amount of £94 about. At present you have £100 a-year for clothing the scholars; under the scheme of the Commissioners the maximum for this purpose will be £50; and a building which cost many thousands of pounds is to be given away. In short, the entire amount left by the founder for the primary education of the poor and needy is to be taken away, and applied to the purpose of secondary education for the richer classes. I, for one, shall protest against this scheme for the confiscation of money intended for the

elementary education of the poor children of Dollar.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I am sorry to differ from my hon. Friends near me; but it seems to me that a mistaken view has been taken by them of the real interests and rights of the poor in this matter. There is no doubt that this Charity was intended for the benefit of the poor in Dollar; and I shall contend that every farthing of it should be appropriated to that purpose, and should not be diverted to the secondary education of the rich. I have listened with regret to the remarks of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), because I agree with him that the poor have a well-founded claim to free elementary education; and I remember a speech made by him in this House some years ago upon that subject which had a considerable influence on my mind. But the free elementary education of the poor is not in question or in danger. I understand it is secured to the poor of Dollar under this scheme, and I have no doubt that at no very distant date the same boon will be extended to every parish in Scotland and in England also. There is no fear of free elementary education. But the difficulty is to secure the higher education of the poor. It is extremely difficult to get funds for that purpose; and I think we ought, therefore, to welcome these funds whenever we can get hold of them, and any scheme which makes a provision for the purpose of higher education. I do not pretend to be familiar with the scheme; but I understand that it is intended to secure the secondary education of the poor, and accordingly I cannot give my vote in favour of the Motion of my hon. Friend.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I cannot look with favour upon this scheme when, out of the sum of £3,000 a-year, the total amount given for the higher education of poor boys is only £100. That seems to me very inadequate. I shall vote against this scheme, as I have voted against every scheme that has come before this House from the Educational Endowment Commissioners of Scotland, because this scheme, like the rest, is framed on the principle of taking as much as possible from the poor boys and appropriating it for the benefit of

those boys whose higher education their parents are well able to pay.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 77; Noes 135: Majority 58.—(Div. List, No. 18.)

House adjourned at half after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 22nd February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*First Reading* — Pharmacy Acts Amendment * (28).

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES, AND SWORD-BAYONETS.

EXPLANATION.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS): My Lords, I beg to ask leave to explain and correct an answer I made to a noble Earl not now in his place (the Earl of Erne) on the 7th instant. I was then asked a Question as to the manufacturers of the cutlass-bayonets complained of by the Admiralty. My reply was that they were made by certain manufacturers in England—the number purchased being about 20,000. That, it now appears, was a mistake. These cutlass-bayonets were nearly all made at Solingen, in Germany. The mistake arose in this way—in searching the record book of purchases in order to answer the noble Earl's Question, no entry of the purchase of cutlass-bayonets was found other than those which I mentioned—namely, some 20,000 from Birmingham manufacturers. I naturally concluded that these were the cutlass-bayonets complained of; but, in preparing some information the other day for the Committee now sitting on this question, it was found that the number of cutlass-bayonets converted in 1871 far exceeded the number bought in 1858. The record book was again searched, in order that the discrepancy might be cleared up; but that the record book was unable to do, and it was only owing to an effort of memory that the mistake was found out. It appears, I believe, that previous to 1864 it was the custom that all rifles purchased from the trade were made non-interchangeable—

that is to say, that no part of any one rifle was made to fit another; and, consequently, in the Office it was the well-known fact that each rifle was supplied complete in all respects, including the bayonet that was used with it; and the custom, therefore, in making the entry was to enter in the record book at that time the purchase of so many rifles, no mention of bayonets being made any more than of ramrods or trigger-guards. The rifle of that day was not considered complete without its own particular bayonet. It was entered simply as a rifle, and that was how the mistake was not discovered. It will be understood, therefore, why the record showed the purchase of rifles only; and, as I said, it was only an effort of memory on the part of someone who happened to remember the custom of 23 years back that cleared up the difficulty. It appears that the 20,000 cutlass-bayonets mentioned by me were meant, and are so entered in the record book, for naval rifles. But, in 1859, it was decided to purchase a large number of new rifles for the Navy, and 48,000 were ordered from English firms, and 30,000 from Liège. The contract papers show that General Peel authorized the cutlass-bayonets being obtained almost entirely from Germany, at a price ranging from 13s. 6d. to 14s. 6d. I am happy to be able to add that the records also show that, so careful was the Department that the weapon should be a really good one, that a View Department, with English viewers, was set up at Solingen, under Captain Cockburn, R.A., to make sure that every blade passed successfully the test demanded—namely, that it should be sprung to a bend of 3½ inches over a block 7½ inches high; and every blade passed into the Service did go through that trial, and the Testing Department remained at Solingen from 1859 until 1862. Considering the time which has elapsed since these transactions and the other surrounding circumstances, I hope your Lordships will agree with me that the mistake made was not inexcusable.

INDIA—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION — LIBERATION OF 25,000 PRISONERS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF DERBY, in rising to ask the Secretary of State for India, Whe-

ther it is the fact that 25,000 prisoners have been liberated by order of the Governor General, in honour of the Jubilee; whether there is any precedent in English or Anglo-Indian administration for a proceeding of this nature; and, if the statement above referred to proved correct, what conditions have been imposed or precautions taken to prevent injury or danger to the public from so large a release of persons presumably, in part at least, belonging to the criminal classes? said, it was, perhaps, superfluous to say that he did not wish to criticize, in any censorious spirit, the action of the noble Earl the Governor General of India, who was necessarily entitled to be allowed a large discretion in the exercise of his functions, and who had the advantage of being advised by men who thoroughly understood Native feeling. But if a considerable percentage of prisoners were proposed to be released in England, the project would be vetoed by public opinion; nor did he think that the release of ordinary prisoners—for there seemed to be no question here of political offenders—on occasions of public rejoicing was an idea which modern society readily accepted. He wished to know whether these 25,000 prisoners, at the time of their release, had undergone sufficient punishment or not? If they had, ought they not to be released whether there was a Jubilee or not? If they had not, was it expedient to set them free merely in order to give more *éclat* to a public celebration? As regarded the law-abiding population of India, he supposed their interests ought to be considered in the matter; and it certainly seemed to him to be a poor compliment to them to let loose upon them 25,000 persons, many of whom must belong to the criminal class. Since he had put the Question on the Notice Paper he had found that there was a precedent for the course taken; but he was not aware that there was any precedent for discharging prisoners on so large a scale as this, and even if Native precedent was to be acted upon to a certain extent, he objected to the practice being carried further than had previously been done. The proceeding was one which had caused a good deal of surprise in this country; and though, for obvious reasons, he was not willing to censure what had been done, especially without hearing what was to be

said in defence, he thought his noble Friend the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) would, in any case, not be sorry to have an opportunity of explaining the circumstances of the liberation of this large number of prisoners.

THE EARL OF LYTTON said, he felt bound to bear his personal testimony that the acts of grace to which he understood that Lord Dufferin had obtained Her Majesty's sanction in connection with the celebration of the Jubilee in India were not without precedent. Of course, the precedents for such acts could not reach far back in the records of British Indian government, for the simple reason that these acts were essentially acts of Sovereign power. No such power was possessed by the Company, and no such power could have been exercised by the Government of the Company. The noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby) had alluded to the precedent of 1877, when Her Majesty assumed the title of Empress of India, and when a similar liberation of Native Indian prisoners took place. At that time nearly 16,000 persons were liberated, and the number represented, he believed, about 10 per cent of the total number of prisoners in the various Provinces of India. Her Majesty, in the capacity of Sovereign of India, had, undoubtedly, acted on that occasion in conformity with the immemorial practice of the Sovereigns of India. No doubt, She acted on the advice of Her Indian Government. But that advice was, of course, approved by Her Ministers at home; and he believed that the noble Earl opposite was one of the Ministers responsible for the approval of it. At any rate, the noble Earl had not then ceased to be a Member of the Cabinet which approved it. He could assure their Lordships that in 1877 no ill results followed the liberation of prisoners, and he was persuaded that no ill results were likely to follow on the present occasion. The prisoners liberated in 1877 were very carefully selected; and, no doubt, they had been carefully selected now by the local Governments, who would be especially affected by the result of that selection. The selections were not made from the criminal classes; they had special reference to the good behaviour of the prisoners liberated; and they were confined to pri-

soners sentenced for light offences—he thought mostly for debt. The liberated prisoners were also carefully watched afterwards; and, though he spoke from memory, he believed he was right in saying that of the 16,000 prisoners released in 1877 only two were afterwards re-committed. He could, however, fully appreciate the not unnatural impression which had, doubtless, prompted the Question asked by the noble Earl; and had he not been personally concerned in the Government of India, he should probably have shared them. The proceeding referred to in that Question could not be followed in England. In this country it would be justly regarded not merely as absurd, but as mischievous. Many things could be done with safety in England which could not be practised with safety in India, and he submitted that the converse of that proposition was equally true. The whole social and intellectual fibre of the Eastern World differed from that of the Western, and notably in this—that the inveterate disposition of all Oriental peoples, whether Hindoo or Mahomedan, African or Asiatic, was to cherish with the most passionate tenacity all the characteristics of personal government in its most personal form. Those populations infinitely preferred to the most perfect administrative machine any form of government in which they recognized the personal presence of a human heart and a human will. That was why the transfer of our Indian Government from the Company to the Crown was popular with the Natives of India; not because of any change made in the constitution or policy of the Government of India, but because it substituted in the popular imagination a human being for an abstract impersonal entity. Once, in the course of a tour of inspection along a solitary pass on the North-West Frontier, he was riding in advance of the gentlemen who were with him, when his bridle rein was seized by an old grey-headed Indian woman, who began to address him with great volubility in a language which he did not understand. It appeared, when the story was interpreted, that the woman was a widow and had an only son, who was a soldier in Her Majesty's Native Army, and who, for some offence not very grave, was then undergoing a term of imprisonment. This man's aged mother, having

heard that the Viceroy was about to pass that way, had waited night and day for more than a week in that savage and solitary part, and, as she alleged, without food—indeed, he did not see how she could get anything to eat in such a place—in order that she might not miss the opportunity of imploring from his clemency the liberation of her son. It was absolutely certain, if her appeal had been made to an Indian Sovereign, it would have been granted on the spot, and she would have gone her way with gratitude in her heart and benedictions on her lips. As, however, the appeal was made to the Executive head of a very highly organized Government machine, he was obliged to cause her to be informed that her application would be at once referred to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department, and that the Secretary would submit the matter, with his Report, to the Military Member of the Council, who would then communicate on the subject of it with the Commander-in-Chief; that, on hearing from the Commander-in-Chief, the Government of India, in another of its Departments, would enter into correspondence about it with the local Government; that, finally, all the documents relating to the case would be laid before the Viceroy; and that if, in the opinion of his duly constituted advisers, the application could be entertained, it would be granted, otherwise not. It was, of course, difficult to make her understand that these explanations were not ironical, and he would not forget the expression of pained perplexity, and then of absolute dismay, with which she received them. They often heard a good deal of the supposed right of non-British races subject to the British Crown to be governed according to their own non-British or anti-British ideas. So far as this doctrine had reference to the fundamental conditions of British supremacy throughout all parts of the British Empire, he believed it to be thoroughly unsound. But local prejudices were no more entitled to be treated as universal truths, when they happened to be British, than when they happened to be Oriental; and for such a Government as that of India to place itself in supercilious antagonism to Indian sentiments and traditions, which its own experience had proved to be innocuous,

would be, he submitted, not policy, but pedantry.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount Cross): My Lords, I have first to thank the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby) for his courtesy in postponing his Question until to-day. It has enabled me to have communication with my noble Friend the Viceroy of India (the Earl of Dufferin), and I am now able to give the House that information which probably your Lordships would like to have. There can be no doubt whatever, as the noble Earl (the Earl of Lytton) observed, that if you look upon this matter in a Western point of view it was a very startling announcement; and it is simply because we are dealing with Oriental peoples, with Oriental notions and prejudices and Oriental customs, that the Viceroy, in the exercise of the discretion which he undoubtedly has in distributing the mercies of the Crown, acted in the manner stated. I am quite sure no one who knows the Viceroy could possibly think that he has acted without, in the first place, great consideration, or without consultation. Therefore, I think it would best suit your Lordships' convenience if I read the telegram which I have received from the Viceroy, which explains the reasons why he had acted on precedent, and the precautions taken that improper persons should not be let out. The telegram is as follows:—

“From Viceroy, February 20, 1887.—Release of prisoners.—23,007 criminal and 298 civil prisoners were released in British India on account of Jubilee. Measure most acceptable to Native sentiment, and supported by practice of Native rule. Precedent on assumption of title of Empress of India by Her Majesty, when 16,000 prisoners were released. No prisoners released whose conduct in gaol has not been good, and none whose release was likely to give rise to blood feuds or other disturbances of the public peace. All professional and habitual criminals and prisoners convicted more than twice were excluded from act of clemency. The great majority of prisoners were those whose sentences would have expired between the 16th instant and the 20th of June next, 50th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession. Government of India has no reason to believe that release on January 1, 1877, occasioned any public danger, and does not anticipate any in this instance. Releases have been made from gaols scattered all over British India, in view to spreading number of released as evenly as possible over all localities.”

That is all the information I have on the matter, and I do not think I should be justified in saying more.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON said, he had succeeded the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Lytton) as Viceroy, and his experience in this matter went to confirm the statement made by the noble Earl. He (the Marquess of Ripon) went to India three years after the liberation of the 16,000 prisoners referred to, and he never heard from anyone any objection taken nor any criticism made. Nor did he believe that any evil consequences had resulted. He was sure their Lordships could place such complete confidence in the present Viceroy as to be sure that the course he had taken on this occasion was wise and prudent.

PHARMACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Pharmacy Act, 1852, and the Pharmacy Act, 1868—Was presented by The Earl of Milltown; read 1st. (No. 28.)

House adjourned at a quarter before
Five o'clock, to Thursday next,
a quarter past Ten o'clock

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 22nd February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Clyde, Ardrishaig, and Crinan Railway.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered—First Reading*—County Courts (Expenses)* [177]; Sanitary Registration of Buildings* [178]; Merchandise (Fraudulent Marks)* [179].

First Reading—Municipal Corporations Acts (Ireland) Amendment (No. 2)* [176].

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—*Third Reading*—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* [127], and *passed*.

PARLIAMENT—MEETING OF THE HOUSE—ASH WEDNESDAY.

Motion made, and Question put, “That this House will meet To-morrow at Two of the clock.”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

The House divided:—Ayes 240; Noes 86: Majority, 154.—(Div. List, No. 19.)

PRIVILEGE.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—IMPUTATION UPON MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I wish, Sir, to ask your opinion on a question of Privilege.

I desire to call attention to a sentence which appears in *The Times* newspaper of this morning, concerning certain Members of this House, and reflecting, as I think, upon the action of this House itself. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether I shall be in Order if I make a Motion on the subject? The sentence to which I desire to call attention is this. The article, after mentioning certain Members of this House, says with regard to them—

“History will record with amazement that these men, whose political existence depends upon an organized system of midnight murder, and who draw at once their living and their notoriety from the steady perpetration of crimes for which civilization decrees the gallows, are permitted to sit in the British House of Commons.”

Now, Sir, I think that is a reflection upon this House—namely, that we permit an organized band of murderers to sit with us in this House, and that organized band of murderers are the very men who, as essential to the Constitution, a large Party on the other side of the House have declared must remain at Westminster. I wish to ask whether I shall be in Order in moving a Resolution in reference to this extraordinary statement as a question of Privilege?

MR. SPEAKER: My attention has been called only a short time ago to the article to which the hon. Baronet refers; but, however grave the charges and imputations made in that article may be, I do not think it is a case of Privilege. It has been the practice of this House to restrain Privilege under great limitations and conditions; and these restrictions and limitations have been, in my opinion, very wisely imposed by the House upon itself. The Rule is that, when imputations are made, in order to raise a case of Privilege the imputation must refer to the action of hon. Members in the discharge of their duties in the actual transaction of the Business of this House; and though I quite understand the hon. Baronet having brought this matter to my notice, I cannot rule that this is a case of Privilege. Of course, if hon. Members think themselves aggrieved, they have a remedy; and they will not be precluded from pursuing their remedy elsewhere than in this House.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): May I be allowed to ask what is the remedy for

the House, because it is the House itself that is attacked?

MR. SPEAKER: I have ruled, in accordance with the precedents of this House, that it is not a question of Privilege; and, therefore, discussion cannot take place upon it now.

QUESTIONS.

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SASINE OFFICE, EDINBURGH—SALE OF STAMPS.

MR. M'EWAN (Edinburgh, Central) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, The exact amount of surplus funds paid into the Imperial Exchequer by the Sasine Office, Edinburgh, during the last 20 years; and, to what purpose the money has been applied; and, if he would state the amount of commission paid in respect of the sale of stamps to the present retailer since the date of his appointment; and, whether, on a favourable opportunity arising, the sale of these stamps would be transferred to the Inland Revenue or the Cashier's Department in the Sasine Office?

THE SECRETARY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): All fees received in the General Register House, of which the Sasine Office is a branch, are paid into the Exchequer; but the account kept does not show the amount received from each branch, and I am, therefore, unable to give the amount paid in respect of the Sasine Office. I may state, however, that the cost of the General Register House, as a whole, exceeds the amount of the fees received. It is impossible to state exactly how much the present retailer receives in commission on the sale of stamps; but it may be taken approximately at £480 per annum, or a total of £7,000 since his appointment in 1871. On the occurrence of a vacancy arrangements will be made, if possible, for a more economical system of distribution.

HARBOURS, DOCKS, AND PIERS CLAUSES ACT, 1847—HARBOURS EXEMPT—LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, How many harbours are exempt by special Act from the 16th section of the Harbour, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act of 1847, which provides that the undertakers, before they

shall be entitled to take any rates in respect of the harbour, dock, or pier, shall provide, and always thereafter maintain in good repair, an efficient and well-appointed lifeboat, a Manby's mortar, and a sufficient supply of Cartes rockets, unless specially exempt; and, in view of the advance of the times, will he cause the word "steam" to be added to the word "lifeboat?"

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): It would take a long time to search through all the Harbour Acts of the last 40 years; but I may say that, of late years, owing to the activity of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and to the fact that the particular rockets and mortars named in the Act of 1847 have been replaced by more efficient life-saving apparatus, the section to which the hon. Member refers has practically remained in abeyance; and it has become the practice, when incorporating in Private Bills the Harbours, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act, 1847, to provide that that section, and the three following ones, relating to lifeboats, and to tide and weather gauges, shall not come into operation unless and until and except so far as the Board of Trade from time to time require. I am not aware that any lifeboats have yet been fitted with steam, except for purposes of experiment, and, therefore, can give no undertaking on the subject.

MERCHANT SHIPPING — ASSISTANCE TO VESSELS NEAR MILFORD HAVEN.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, if it may be understood that H.M.S. *Stormcock* is ready to assist vessels in distress in the neighbourhood of Milford Haven?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk) who replied, said: The *Stormcock* is a tug attached to the Dockyard at Pembroke for the work of that yard. She would certainly be sent by the Superintendent to aid any vessel reported to be in distress off the port; but the radius of her action, she being attached to the Dockyard, is necessarily limited.

WRECKS AND LOSS OF LIFE IN THE BRISTOL CHANNEL.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Secretary to the

Board of Trade, if his attention has been called to the loss of 300 lives, and 50 vessels, during the past four months, in the Bristol Channel; and to the suggestion that, pending the construction of a Harbour of Refuge, a powerful steam tug should be stationed at the Mumbles Head, with a view to save life and property during severe gales; which, in consequence of the liberal offer made by a Swansea firm to supply gratis the necessary coal for the use of such tug, would entail but small expense?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Our attention has, of course, been called to the lamentable loss of life which has taken place in the Bristol Channel within the last few months; but we fail to trace any suggestion such as that stated to have been made with reference to the steam tug. Nor are we aware, except from the Question of the hon. Member, of the liberal offer of coals by a Swansea firm to which he directs our notice. I need hardly add that every inquiry possible under the circumstances, has been, or is, being made.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "CATERINA."

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, if his attention has been called to the loss of the Italian barque *Caterina*, on the 17th January, upon the Nash Sands, in Swansea Bay, on a fairly clear night, with all hands, which might have been saved had a succour steam tug been stationed in that Bay?

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth) (who replied) said: The Reports which have been received state that the *Caterina* put back owing to a thick fog; that she anchored between Scilly and Barry; and that, a stiff breeze springing up, she dragged her anchors, and foundered with all hands. It is impossible to say what might or might not have been the result if a steam tug had been despatched to the vessel's assistance. There are, however, plenty of steam tugs in the district, and the masters of them do not, as a rule, neglect to attempt to render salvage service if they possibly can.

INDIA—MADRAS COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is a fact that the senior member of the Madras Covenanted Civil Service has been superseded without his resignation having, in the usual manner, previously appeared in *The Gazette*; and, whether he is prepared to explain this departure from the usual course?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The gentleman alluded to in the Question was not superseded, but resigned his appointment as member of the Madras Council on the 7th of December, 1886. There was no departure from the usual course in his resignation not having appeared in *The Gazette*.

THE NORTH AMERICAN FISHERY—CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES—THE FISHERY DISPUTES.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has yet received the Despatch from the Canadian Government, which, on the 8th instant, he said was on his way to this country, containing suggestions for a *modus vivendi* for the settlement of the American fishery disputes; and, whether he will be good enough to inform the House of its tenour?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government are in possession of the despatch from the Canadian Government relative to the Canadian Fisheries, which the hon. Member refers to. It is under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, and will be presented to the House with further Papers. It would be unusual and inconvenient to state its tenour at the present stage.

POST OFFICE—POSTAGE TO INDIA AND CHINA THROUGH BELGIUM.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the rate of postage to India and China from France, Belgium, and Germany by British steamers, subsidized by the British Government, is 2½d. per half-ounce, while the rate from England to the same countries, for letters carried in the

same British steamers, is 5d. per half-ounce; whether the English Government receives, under the International Postal Convention, as consideration for the carriage of letters to India and China in steamers subsidized with English money, the sum of 1½d. per half-ounce; and, whether there is any loss on such carriage; and, if so, why the Government undertakes to carry at a loss for foreign countries, while declining to reduce the double postage charged upon the people of the United Kingdom and India?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): My answer to the hon. Member's first and second Questions is in the affirmative. On the third point, I may say that there is no loss on the carriage of these foreign letters to India and China, because the Post Office pays a fixed subsidy to the British contractors for carrying the Indian and China mails; and if we did not get the foreign letters even at the cheap rate of 1½d. each, our receipts would be so much the less, and our yearly loss so much the greater.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE MURDER AT BALLYCAR, CO. CLARE.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, after John Byen had been brutally murdered at Ballycar, County Clare, the contractor to the Ennis Infirmary refused to supply a coffin; whether it was impossible to get one provided in Ennis; and, whether it was necessary to procure one from Dublin in which to remove the unfortunate man's remains?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Yes, Sir; I am sorry to say the statements contained in the Question are true.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE LETTER CARRIER BETWEEN CARRICK-ON-SHANNON AND DRUMSNA.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the rural postman between Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumsna, County Leitrim, travelling between those places twice daily, has to walk a distance of 20 Irish miles per day; whether his first journey com-

mences at 5 o'clock a.m., and his last ends at 10 p.m.; and, whether his remuneration for this work is only 11s. per week; and, if this statement be true, he will consider whether a more adequate rate of remuneration should not be given?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The official walk of the rural postman between Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumsna is 12 statute miles on week days and nine and a-quarter on Sundays; but, for his own convenience, after finishing his delivery at Drumsna each morning, he returns to Carrick-on-Shannon, and goes out again to Drumsna in the evening to commence the collection, thus adding rather more than six miles a-day to his walk. He starts from Carrick-on-Shannon at 5 a.m., and returns at 9 p.m. These are exceptional hours; and inquiry is being made whether they cannot be somewhat curtailed, without materially lessening the public convenience. The postman's wages are 11s. a-week, and that is about the rate paid in Ireland for a walk of 12 miles a-day.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND)—LOAN TO THE SLIGO, &c. RAILWAY COMPANY.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, what action has been taken upon the undertaking given in the House by the Secretary to the Treasury, on the 14th of November, 1884—namely, that steps would be taken for the recovery of any instalments of principal and interest overdue on the 1st of January, 1885, in respect of the loan of £100,000 granted by the Irish Board of Works to certain persons acting on behalf of the Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties Railway Company; how much of the principal of the loan, and how much interest, has fallen into arrear since the 11th of November, 1884; how much of principal, and of interest respectively, is overdue, by each of the persons concerned, at the present time; and, who are the sureties?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Steps are being taken for the recovery of the instalments of principal and interest overdue on January 1, 1885. Since November, 1884, the principal had fallen into arrear to the extent of £9,000; the interest charge-

able against the line to the extent of £4,987 10s.; the interest chargeable against sureties to the extent of £1,992 10s. No portion of the principal overdue is chargeable to the sureties; but they are jointly and severally liable for interest overdue to the extent of £1,992 10s. I see no public advantage in giving the names of the guarantors.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND). MR. F. MORRICE—COUNTY CLARE GRAND JURY.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Francis Morrice, Secretary to the County Clare Grand Jury, is in the habit of using his office in the County Court-house, Ennis, as a rent office; and, if so, is he entitled to use the public office of the county for the work of his private agencies?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Secretary of the Grand Jury is a local office under local authority, and I cannot give the hon. Member the information he asks.

HARBOURS, &c. (SCOTLAND)—GIGULUM SOUND.

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether several complaints have been made to the Board of Trade of shipmasters throwing ballast overboard in the harbour or roadstead of Gigulum Sound, and thereby damaging the anchorage; if so, whether the Board of Trade, in the interest of the public, have taken any steps to prevent the repetition of this offence, seeing that Gigulum Sound is the only shelter for coasting vessels between the Mull of Cantyre and West Loch Tarbert; and, whether it would be possible, by the action of the Procurator Fiscal or other Public Prosecutor, to put the law in force more speedily and effectually?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Since the beginning of the year 1866, four complaints have been received at the Board of Trade of ballast being thrown overboard in Gigulum Roadstead. In the last of these cases the Board have remonstrated with the shipowner, who has cautioned his master, and given an assurance that the offence will not be

repeated. In the event of further complaint, the Board will consider if it is not possible to meet the views of my hon. and gallant Friend by communicating with the Lord Advocate.

REVISION OF PARLIAMENTARY
VOTERS (IRELAND)—BOROUGH OF
BELFAST.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the revision of Parliamentary voters for the borough of Belfast last year occupied the full time of four Judges sitting continuously for a month, and was similarly protracted in 1885; whether a somewhat similar state of things arose in South Derry, and in the four Divisions of Tyrone, and in North Fermanagh; and, whether the Government intend to take any steps to remedy a state of things in which a Register, lasting only for a year, takes so long to prepare and revise?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The statements contained in the Question are substantially correct. It is difficult to say what remedy could be applied by the Government. The remedy would rather seem to be in the hands of the professional men who appear before the Court, and who might, perhaps, arrange to expedite business by endeavouring to restrict discussion within reasonable limits.

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ACT, 1878
—FORM OF CERTIFICATE.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether the following is the usual form of certificate granted by the said Board to applicants for certificates under "The Metropolis Management Act, 1878," section 12, namely—

"The Metropolitan Board of Works, having been applied to by ——— for a certificate under 41 and 42 *Vict. c. 32*, section 12, do hereby certify that, subject to the condition hereunder specified, the house, room, or other place of public resort known as ———, was on its completion in accordance with the regulations made by the said Board under the provisions of the above-mentioned Act so far as such regulations are applicable thereto. As witness the seal, &c.

"The condition above referred to.

"That no intoxicating liquors be sold on the premises;"

whether the said Board grants a certificate in the above form, or to the like effect, in the case of halls used, or to be used, for dramatic representations as well as for dancing and musical entertainments; whether no other form of certificate is used by the said Board in the case of such applications under section 12 of the above-mentioned Act; whether a second certificate has ever, or, if ever, in what number of cases, been required by the said Board in such cases; whether, on the 22nd December, 1886, the said Board wrote by its Secretary the following letter to the Clerk to the Magistrates at the Surrey Sessions—

"The Board have this day refused the application of the Rev. G. Brooks for a certificate that the Lower Norwood Public Hall is suitable for the performance of stage plays;"

whether at the time when the above refusal was sent, the hall in question was constructed so as to comply with the regulations of the Board of Works; and, whether, before sending the said refusal, the said Board had taken any and what steps to ascertain whether or not its regulations had been complied with; and, if not, whether the Board will now take such steps as may be necessary to ascertain that its regulations have been complied with, and re-consider its decision?

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG) (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to inform the hon. Member that the form of certificate set out in his Question is that usually adopted, with the exception that he attaches a condition prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors which is only used in special cases. The form of certificate is the same whether the building be used for dramatic representations or for dancing and musical entertainments. To the third Question of the hon. Member my answer must be in the negative. There have been occasions on which a second certificate for theatrical purposes has been asked for; but in no case has this been given. Such a letter as that referred to by the hon. Member was sent by direction of the Board. With regard to the sixth clause of the Question, I am informed that the regulations were not wholly complied with. Steps were taken by the Board before deciding on the application to satisfy itself as to the suitability or not of the building referred to for dramatic performances; and I think it

unlikely that the Board would be willing to re-consider its decision.

MR. CONYBEARE: If all the regulations have been complied with, will the Board be willing to re-consider its decision?

SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG: I have done my best to answer the very long and elaborate Question of the hon. Member, which I think very extraordinary; and if he desires any further information I must ask him to put a Question on the Paper, and I will do my best to answer it.

INLAND REVENUE — INCOME TAX — ASSESSMENT ON PUBLIC BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES, ST. PANCRAS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is aware that assessment for Income Tax is made on the public baths and wash-houses of the parish of St. Pancras, erected by the Commissioners of Baths and Wash-houses, under the provisions of 9 & 10 Vict. c. 74, out of moneys raised by loan secured by mortgage on the poor rates and not yet paid off; and, whether last year the Local Commissioners admitted that the expenses were not covered by the receipts, but the Surveyor of Taxes appealed on the ground that a profit was made; if, under these circumstances, he will direct that such establishments shall not be liable to assessments for Income Tax until the loans secured on the rates have been repaid either by grants from the rates or otherwise?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The public baths and wash-houses of the parish of St. Pancras have been assessed to the Income Tax under Schedule A, upon the annual value contained in the Valuation List. Inquiry has been made as to the second part of the Question; but it cannot be found that the Commissioners made any such admission, or that the Surveyor of Taxes appealed on the ground that a profit was made. If further particulars are given further inquiries will be made.

ARMY—SUBSCRIPTION TO THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—CIRCULAR OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury) asked the Secretary of State for War,

Whether his attention has been directed to the recent Circular of His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief in reference to the proposed Imperial Institute; whether this Circular was submitted to the Secretary of State for War, and received his approval and sanction; whether a statement is contained therein, that the rank and file "are not expected to contribute more than one day's pay;" and, whether the rank and file are consequently under an obligation to contribute at least that amount?

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether in the Circular addressed to the Army by the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief, inviting contributions to the Imperial Institute, the statement that the rank and file "are not expected to contribute more than one day's pay," is to be held to refer to the nominal rate of pay, or to the amount actually received by the soldier; or whether he is expected to contribute the amount of regulation stoppages also?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No Circular has been issued to the Army by His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief with reference to the Imperial Institute. But in reply to an inquiry from the General Officer commanding the Home District, His Royal Highness expressed the opinion that any soldier who wished to subscribe to it should not be expected to contribute more than one day's pay. His Royal Highness has always been of opinion that the spontaneity of subscriptions for this purpose will add much to their value; and he is most anxious that no pressure, direct or indirect, should be put upon any soldier to contribute. But as from these Questions it appears that his action has been misunderstood, his Royal Highness has sent a further communication to General Gipps upon the subject.

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC — THE NEW HEBRIDES—FORTIFICATIONS OF THE FRENCH.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received any confirmation or contradiction of the statement contained in a Reuter's tele-

gram, dated Brisbane, 18th February, that the French are about to construct new forts, to increase the number of their troops, and to build new barracks at Port Sandwich, in the New Hebrides?

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he can state when the temporary occupation of the New Hebrides by the French is likely to end?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): There has been no confirmation received by Her Majesty's Government of the statement that the French are about to construct new forts, to increase the number of their troops, and to build new barracks in the New Hebrides. On the contrary, Her Majesty's Government have been informed that the French posts have been much reduced. Her Majesty's Government are in correspondence with the French Government with a view to arrangements under which they will be removed altogether.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT) — DEFECTIVE WEAPONS — CUTLASSES AND SWORD-BAYONETS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he can now furnish the House with the names of the officials who passed the bad cutlasses for the Navy, with a view to proper steps being taken in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No, Sir. In accordance with what I believe to be the general wish, an independent Committee has been appointed to make inquiry into this subject; and it would be improper on my part to anticipate the decision of those who are conducting that inquiry by expressing any opinion of my own.

ELECTION EXPENSES, 1886—THE RETURN.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Return of the Election Expenses of 1886 will be laid upon the Table?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said, the Return would be issued in a few days.

[THE PACIFIC PORTS—ILL-USAGE OF BRITISH SEAMEN.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been recently called by the Board of Trade to two cases of alleged outrage at Astoria, in the Pacific, upon seamen under the British flag; and, if so, what measures he proposes to take in the circumstances; whether he has information to the effect that in many ports on the Pacific ships are boarded by runners armed with revolvers, and means are used, by drugged liquors and otherwise, to induce the men to desert; and if he will state whether other cases of violence in various ports have been recently reported to him with reference to British seamen?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Two shipping cases have been reported from Astoria. Four men are said to have been taken from the *Kitty* in the absence of the master, who succeeded in recovering them. Five men, belonging to the *Ardcar*, left the ship, apparently voluntarily, in the absence of the master. Both captains declined to make written complaints to the Vice Consul, though invited by him to do so. There was nothing in these cases answering the description of outrages. The hon. member was informed on the 18th that no recent Reports of outrages have been received from the Pacific. Further Reports will, however, be called for, and instructions will be sent that all cases shall be strictly investigated.

EGYPT—ENFORCEMENT OF THE CORVÉE.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What arrangement, if any, has been made of the questions recently pending in Egypt regarding the enforcement of the *corvée*; and, when can Papers on the subject, explaining the action in the matter of Great Britain and of other Powers, be presented to the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I am glad to say that arrangements have been made by which

the Egyptian Government will be able to dispense with the *corvée* during the present year. Papers on the subject will be presented when the arrangements have been completed; but some of the communications are only telegraphic, and matters of finance are in course of adjustment.

FACTORIES ACTS—THE TRUCK ACTS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If a Report has been made by the Chief Inspector of Factories, with reference to the complaints of alleged breaches of the Truck Acts in Scotland; and, if so, if he has any objections to supply copies to Members upon their application?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): Such a Report has been made; and the Home Secretary is still considering the question of the most convenient method of making known its contents to those hon. Members who are interested in the question.

In reply to Dr. CLARK (Caithness).

MR. STUART-WORTLEY said: The question of its presentation to Parliament is being considered; but the House is aware that certain legal consequences sometimes attend the publication of matters alleging breaches of the law. A copy was shown to the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) by the Home Secretary in fulfilment of a promise given in this House; but I cannot, without Notice, say whether it has been shown to any other hon. Member.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—"QUEEN *v.* DILLON AND OTHERS."

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in the case of the "*Queen v. Parnell and others*," the panel was struck in the city of Dublin; whether the panel originally contained but 48 names; whether, on the jury which tried the case, there were eight Catholics, three Protestants, and one Quaker; and, whether he will inform the House why the precedent then set has not been

followed in the case of the "*Queen v. John Dillon and others*?"

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.)) asked the hon. Gentleman to postpone his Question until his hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General was present to answer it.

CRIME (IRELAND)—MURDER OF MURPHY, NEAR KILLARNEY.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the reports in the newspapers are accurate, that a man named Murphy was murdered near Killarney on Sunday afternoon last; and, whether he had purchased, under the provisions of the Land Act, the tenant-right of a neighbour's farm?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.)): Yes, Sir; it is true that the murder in question was committed. I cannot answer the second Question.

COMMISSIONERS OF NORTHERN LIGHTS (SCOTLAND)—EXPENDITURE.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Under what section of the Merchant Shipping Act the Northern Lights Commission spent £70 10s. for dinners for 47 persons, and 100 guineas for wines and spirits to the same 47 persons, and if the Board of Trade have allowed the expenditure of the money?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Under what section of the Merchant Shipping Act or Acts expenditure of the following character is sanctioned:—

To the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, Edinburgh.

An account of articles supplied and work performed by John Grieve, Waterloo Hotel, Edinburgh, for the service of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses—

	£	s.	d.
15 Jan.			
To 47 dinners and dessert ..	70	10	0
10 bottles Amontillado ..	5	0	0
4 bottles Montrachet le			
Quiche	3	0	0
4 bottles Punch	1	0	0
4 bottles Madere	4	4	0

15 Jan.	£	s.	d.
12 bottles Steinberg Cabinet 1868.....	18	0	0
24 bottles Pommery and Greno 1874	24	0	0
1 bottle Ruinart 1874..	1	0	0
2 bottles Geisler's Extra Superior	1	5	0
4 bottles Chambertin ..	2	8	0
5 bottles Amontillado Finissimo	5	5	0
4 bottles Brown Solera	4	0	0
3 bottles Port 1834....	4	10	0
19 bottles Chateau Lafitte 1864	28	10	0
Liqueur Brandy, &c..	3	2	0
Whiskey	0	7	6
Waters	0	6	0
Cigars	2	13	6
96 bottles.	£179	1	0

and, whether it is the fact that objection was taken to the above expenditure by the Comptroller and Auditor General, but was afterwards allowed; and, if so, on what grounds?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The matter to which the hon. Member alludes is the subject of a Report to Parliament by the Comptroller and Auditor General on the Mercantile Marine Account, and will, therefore, necessarily be considered by the Public Accounts Committee. Under these circumstances, I think the House will agree with me in thinking it undesirable to anticipate any action the Committee may think necessary to take in the matter.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the hon. Gentleman if pressure was brought to bear on the Northern Lights Commissioners to induce them to give this information, which he was unable to bring to bear in the case of the Trinity House and the Irish Commissioners of Lights, respecting whose expenditure there is no information?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: I think I must ask the hon. Gentleman to give me Notice of the Question.

HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORT BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

MR. G. W. ELLIOT (York, N.R., Richmond) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he is aware that certain

Foreign Governments have prohibited the export of horses, and, in consequence, that English horsedealers and others are unable to bring their purchases to this country, whilst, at the same time, foreign agents are actively employed in buying and exporting abroad English horses every week; and, will he take any steps to prevent these restrictions being continued, or to induce Foreign Governments to relax them in favour of horses destined for this country?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: Her Majesty's Government are aware that certain Foreign Governments have prohibited the export of horses. It is a matter of regret that private persons should be inconvenienced thereby, but as the step has doubtless been taken on grounds of military expediency, Her Majesty's Government could not, with any likelihood of success, take any steps to procure the relaxation of the prohibitions in favour of horses destined for this country.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE DEPRESSION IN AGRICULTURE—LEGISLATION.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the statement of the Marquess of Salisbury, in his letter to the Marquess of Bristol, to the effect that he did not anticipate any amelioration of the present agricultural depression from legislative action; whether in this letter the Marquess of Salisbury referred to any suggested imposition of Protective Duties on corn only; and, whether the Government have relinquished their intention of proposing legislation with regard to the urgent questions of the transfer and settlement of land, and the undue preference in the rates charged by railways in favour of foreign produce?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): My attention has been called to the letter of the Prime Minister by the Question of the right hon. Gentleman. As I have not seen the Marquess of Bristol's letter, to which it is an answer, I am quite unable to say what suggestions it contains; but it is the intention of the Govern-

ment, as announced in Her Majesty's Speech, to propose legislation to Parliament on the subjects mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will propose that the Rules of Procedure, as they are adopted by the House, shall be suspended until the whole of the Rules are passed?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is not proposed to suspend the Rules of Procedure till the whole are passed. Former precedents will be adhered to; and each Rule as it receives the sanction of the House will come into operation.

ARMS (IRELAND) ACT—PROCLAMATION OF THE COOLGREANY MEETING.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Sir, I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which I have given him private Notice in respect to the proclamation of the Coolgreany meeting last Sunday. I wish to ask him, Whether the meeting was called by public placard inviting the farmers and labourers of Wicklow to meet together and show their allegiance to the National cause; also, whether the proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant alleged neither of the usual reasons for the suppression of the meeting—that a breach of the peace was apprehended, or that if the meeting was held, it would lead to the obstruction of the Sheriff; also, if he will tell the House the nature of the informations on which the meeting was proclaimed?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The meeting was proclaimed because the Government had reason to believe it was to be held for an illegal purpose. The hon. Member has not given me Notice of the Question he has asked. He simply asked the Question I have answered. If he wishes to ask for further information on the subject, I must ask him to put his Question on the Paper.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—(RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1.—RESOLUTION

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [February 21],

Motion made, and Question proposed,

I.—Closure of Debate.

"That, at any time after a question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a discussion any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

"Provided always, that Questions for the closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members,"—(Mr. W. H. Smith.)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): The Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) appealed to us to discuss the Rules with a single desire to promote the efficiency and to preserve the dignity of the House, and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) cordially reciprocated this wish. I promise to act in this spirit, and not to utter one word of Party recrimination, although I will exercise free criticism on the Rules before us. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) warned us that our labours will be useless, because the Rules passed by the House in 1882 have proved of no value. This is not the fact. Most of these Rules have now become Standing Orders of the House, and have frequently been brought into operation with considerable advantage. But they were passed at a time when there was much

[Second Night.]

Opposition, and their revision now, when there is a general disposition to restore the working efficiency of the House, gives us prospects to make them still better adapted to the needs of the House. I take it for granted that we are all agreed some remedy must be found to prevent the waste of time which, in recent years, has destroyed the efficiency of the House and lowered its reputation in the opinion of the nation. The House must be supreme in its own discipline, and its Members should have such innate respect for its Rules, that they should rarely be reminded by the Speaker or Chairman that they are outside the limits of Order. In all ordinary meetings, the intervention of a Chairman is comparatively rare; but, in our present method of conducting Business, it is constant. In the year 1881, when obstructive discussion attained its maximum, the Speaker had to intervene on points of Order 935 times, and the Chairman of Committees 939 times. Allowing only 5 minutes on each occasion, the wrangling between the Chair and Members occupied 150 hours of the time of the House. Collisions between the Chair and Members necessarily weaken the Chair, and tend to disorganize the House. The New Rules passed in 1882 have mitigated this intolerable evil, though it has not been extirpated. Perhaps the Rules now proposed may not wholly root out the evil; but even if they do not, they may improve the sense of the House as to the need of forbearance on the part of Members, upon each of whom the dignity and efficiency of the House depends, rather than upon the exercise of penal rules. It depends far more upon the co-operation of Members to preserve the dignity and Order of the House than it does upon the Speaker, whose intervention in a well-ordered Assembly should be of rare occurrence. The Rules now offered for our acceptance are intimately interwoven, and cannot be considered separately without seeing their mutual bearing. Still their object can be divided into three heads:—(1) The method by which free, instructive discussion can be promoted, and unfair, obstructive discussion can be prevented; (2) how the large amount of work brought before Parliament may be most efficiently performed by the devolution of portions of it to Committees; (3) how the work

of Members may be regulated so as to produce a maximum of efficiency by an 8½ hours' limitation of labour. The first head, that which aims at repressing unfair obstructive discussion, while it does not interfere with free instructive discussion, is already accepted in principle by a large proportion of the House. It is opposed by the hon. Member for Cork, who warns you, in expressive terms, that you will not find that it is fitted to grease the wheels of the Parliamentary machine. It is intended for a very different object. Its purpose is to unlock the wheels of the machine, the locking of which a few Members in combination may be able to effect against the will of the great majority who desire the machine to continue in motion. The hon. Member for Cork repeats the old argument that a Closure Rule will enable majorities to tyrannize over minorities. The Closure Rule of 1882 has not had this effect, and the experience of almost all Legislative Assemblies throughout the world shows that it does not work in this way. It works in practice in exactly the opposite way, for its purpose, and its actual working, is to prevent minorities tyrannizing over majorities. The reason is not far to seek. A majority is returned to Parliament by the people to obtain specific ends, and their objects and desire are to promote action; while the minority, distrusting these ends, have a temptation to promote inaction. An irresponsible minority is much more likely to abuse its power than a majority which is guided by a responsible Government, charged with working the Parliamentary machine with the least possible friction. We have before us two palpable facts: the first, that all other Legislatures apply Closure Rules of a simple character, without injury to instructive discussion; the second, that our present Closure Rule is so cumbersome that it can only be rarely useful. Our House is now much more democratic than formerly, and the people see, with profound dissatisfaction, that the wheels of the Parliamentary machine can be locked by a few men, and that we no longer advance on the road of progress. This House is sometimes like Mr. Pecksniff's horse, which Dickens describes as puffing, pawing, and prancing, though it positively refuses to go ahead. The first Rule of Closure is introduced to us as a

great improvement upon that of 1882. I wish that I could think it was. It is the actual Rule of 1882, with one difference, that, whereas formerly the Speaker had to take the initiative when he had made up his mind as to what was "the evident sense of the House;" now any Member may take the initiative after having obtained the consent of the Speaker. By the existing Rule, the Speaker is simply the interpreter of what he believes to be the will of the House; now he is to be converted into a judge of what the House should do. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, in his opening speech, put this very plainly. He said—

"The Speaker occupies a judicial position in this House, which may be of the highest benefit to the House itself and to the country, by securing the rights of minorities and, at the same time, the dignity of the House of Commons—securing the rights of minorities without, however, allowing them to become a tyrannical obstruction to the business of the House. By this Rule full security will be obtained that the debate shall not be closed until, in the judgment of the Speaker, the discussion has been sufficient."

Surely, then, I am right when I say that while by the existing Rule the Speaker is the mere interpreter of the evident sense of the House, he is, in future, to have the much more responsible position of being the judge of what the House ought to do. I think this is a formidable duty to throw upon the Speaker. The present rule of making him an interpreter was, I always thought, a dangerous one to the Chair, and the Speaker, feeling it to be so, has rarely ventured to act on this initiation. What will result when, instead of being an interpreter, he becomes a judge? He will still more rarely act, because he will dislike to be the judge of the House as to the extent of its discussions. Under ordinary circumstances, the Rule with such a proviso will be rarely acted upon; but upon extraordinary occasions, what may happen? Let me go back to 1881 for an illustration. Fierce passions and much Obstruction were raised during the passage of the Crimes Act through this House. In an all-night Sitting, the Deputy Speaker occupied the Chair. The Majority, consisting both of Liberals and Conservatives, almost fiercely urged the Chair to make a general suspension of Irish Members, and the Deputy Speaker declined to do so, as he

did not consider the Rule was then applicable. The whole body of Conservative Members rose and walked out of the House. In times of fierce and excited debate, this might happen again. Members in the Majority might make incessant appeals for closure and could easily get into conflict with the Chair, whose authority would thus be weakened. The responsibility for carrying out the Rule of Closure should rest with the House, and not upon the judgment of the Speaker. All this would be avoided if you made the Closure Rule automatic in its action. This will ultimately become necessary if we are to have interrupted meetings according to the Fourth Rule. If you have not, the means of Obstruction will be increased two-fold. Just as the Speaker says formally—"The Question is that I now leave the Chair" and no one thinks of dividing on it, so he could say formally at the end of each Sitting "That the Question be now put." That would be negated as a matter of course when the House desired to continue discussion; but if it is considered that the debate has been sufficient, then, without any Member intervening, or any consent being necessary, the House could express its opinion. This has always appeared to me to be the least repulsive, as well as the easiest, way of ascertaining the sense of the House with regard to the length of debate. The Committee presided over by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) did not go quite so far as this automatic method; but they nearly reached it, only they complicated it by asking for a two-thirds majority. I have never seen the need for any but a simple majority, if there be a sufficient quorum *ad hoc* to prevent a snatch Division. With a house of 100 or 150 Members, that would be impossible. The most important Acts involving the happiness and welfare of the people are passed or rejected by a simple majority. Why should we be so careful in regard to our own lesser Rules of Debate by making a complicated Rule of Closure? It is no doubt true that in those Assemblies which use closure as a common method of expediting Public Business, it has been found necessary to limit the length of speeches. That is the natural supplement to closure; because a limited debate lessens free discussion, if a few men speak at an inordinate length, and

[Second Night.]

shut out other speakers who desire to speak with brevity. The United States Congress provides for this, in its practical fashion, by allowing speeches to be printed although they have not been delivered. This pleases the constituencies, and perhaps does no harm to efficient instructive discussion. I should not, however, like such a rough-and-ready method to be adopted in this Assembly. There is no provision for limitation of speech in the Rules before us; but it must follow as a corollary to the proposition of efficient closure, as it provides a safety valve for the easy working of the machine. I now come to the second head—how to pass work from the House by devolution to Grand Committees. Perhaps I may claim to have some knowledge of the working of these Committees, as I had the honour to be Chairman of the panel of Chairmen of the Grand Committees when the experiment was tried, and it was my duty to watch the proceedings. The conviction forced on my mind was that they worked well when they received fair play; but that prolixity and frequency of speeches by the same Member were as possible in them as in the Committee of the Whole House. They were too large for business, and could be made into imitative repetitions of the Whole House. They had not the merits of Select Committees, which are usually thoroughly good working bodies, encouraging no prolixity of debate, and going through their work in a good business fashion. I have frequently presided over Select Committees, and I had the short experience of presiding in Grand Committees; but I confess that I often wished the latter were less like the House of Commons, and were more like the Select Committees of the House. I therefore hailed with pleasure the views of the Conservative Government of last year, when the then Leader of the House (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) proposed the formation of a sufficient number of Public Bill Committees of 30 to 40 Members in each to do the work of devolution. These would have worked in an easy and practical way, as they would have the advantages of Select Committees, large enough to be representative, and small enough not to encourage prolixity of debate or to invite Obstruction. The proposal certainly did not receive the support of the Select Committee presided over by the noble

Marquess the Member for Rossendale. That Committee recommended the formation of four Grand Committees into which the whole House should be divided, so that they would have contained 167 Members in each. The Government rejected that plan, and now revert to the method authorized by the Resolution of the House on 1st December, 1881, with the addition of a Grand Committee of Agriculture, the value of which no one seems to recognize. As they rejected the plan of the Select Committee, would it not have been better to revert to the still better plan proposed by the Conservative Government last year? Perhaps, however, this Government desire at present to make little change, as they may next year propose a larger measure of devolution when a good deal of the Business of the House may be removed from it altogether. Of course, I do not know the Government proposals about Private Bills and Local Government. If there is to be a great devolution of work to authorities outside this House, fewer Public Bill Committees will be required within it; but with our present knowledge of existing work, I do not think that these Grand Committees, constituted as they were in 1882, will effectively act in the devolution of work. Upon the last head, I must say only a few words. The work of the House requires so much attention from Members that its faithful discharge is beyond human endurance. To work all day on Committees, and to remain in the House till 1 or 2 next morning is an abnormal strain on any constitution. No wonder that we have been warned by the Speaker that, as the Session advances, he observes the work is slurred and that the debates show signs of weariness and irritability. The fifth Rule offers us the relief of an 8½ hours' labour protection. To many of us who are constantly sent by the House upstairs to Select Committees, the labour relief is only one of 10½ hours, and surely that is as much as even a strong man can give of daily labour. I believe that the work will be much better done by this limitation and interruption of work, and I heartily support this Rule in its intention. If the House modify it, I trust it will be by reduction and not by increase of the time. I will only say in conclusion that I hope the

reform of our Rules of Procedure will be carried out with the simple desire to fit the House to carry on its constantly increasing work with dignity and efficiency. There is now a general feeling in the country that the no-work tactics, which have some time prevailed, should be firmly repressed, and that while instructive discussion should be promoted, obstructive discussion should be a crime which the House should sternly punish. Experience has shown that under our present Rules the House can be reduced to a state of temporary paralysis by prolixity of speaking and obstructive tactics. Among our Members there are statesmen of whose constructive ability we are all proud, but even they may be reduced to a state of impotency by obstructive debate. The nation demands that we should regulate our proceedings so as to remove the scandal, and unless we do so it will be impossible to recover the confidence and sympathy of the people, who still rest in hope that our great Representative and Consultative Assembly will recover that efficiency which made it in the past an honour to this nation, and an example to other nations that desired free Parliamentary Government.

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University): I think I may congratulate the House on the calm and philosophical tone in which my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) has dealt with the proposals of the Government. He has admitted the urgency of the proposals for dealing with the Business of the House. I note, however, that his language is very different from that employed yesterday by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who found fault with the Government for making them the main Business of the Session. The great objection last night was to the proposal of a new scheme. The House had sanctioned a Committee, and it has been set aside. Why not lay the Report of the Committee before the House, and ask the House to accept the recommendations of the Committee? My right hon. Friend now comes down, and neither supports the recommendations of the Government nor those of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, of whose Government he was a Member; but certain other Resolutions of his own which he asks the House to consider. I

think all that shows that the Government have pursued the right course in the steps they have taken. We have had inquiries by Committees without end, and they have presented many voluminous Reports, although I have never seen any attempt to carry them into effect. When my right hon. Friend the late Sir Stafford Northcote was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1878, a Committee appointed under his auspices presented a Report; but instead of acting upon that Report, the Government contented themselves by producing two or three recommendations of the Committee and dropping the rest. I take it that it is impossible to ask the House to legislate on the Report of the Committee. No doubt, the Report of a Committee affords valuable material for the consideration of the Government of the day; but it is for the Government themselves to produce a complete scheme, carefully considered in all its parts and submitted to the House, on its own responsibility. My right hon. Friend says he objects to the course taken by the Government in two particulars—first, in respect of the form of closure, and, next, in respect of the devolution to Grand Committees. Now, in regard to closure by the interposition of the Speaker, I find it difficult to follow my right hon. Friend. He considers, I suppose, that the Speaker should be entirely relieved from all action in the matter; and, as far as I understand him, he is of opinion that there should be no Motion at all—no initiative, but that the question should be put by the Speaker at the close of the debate without anyone moving at all. I cannot believe that the House will ever consent to any form of closure like that. My right hon. Friend objects to the Speaker being called upon to interpose in any way. He says that the Speaker is to be the interpreter and not the judge of the House, and the hon. Member for Mid Lothian last night drew a subtle distinction between the Speaker sitting in the Chair and judging what is the “evident sense of the House,” which must be a matter of fact, and pronouncing his opinion that a subject has been sufficiently debated. The right hon. Member for South Leeds appears to think that, in ordinary times, the Rule would not work at all; and in regard to extraordinary times, he has given a rather

[Second Night.]

remarkable account. He stated that when the House was in Committee all night in 1881 Members were continually rising to request the Chairman to give an order from the Chair, and because he was unwilling to do so a considerable number of Members left the House in a body. However that may be, I do not see how that solitary instance affords a convincing proof of what we ought to do. It must be remembered that that was before the present Rules were adopted; and I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the Rules of 1882, as far as they have gone, have worked well. The difficulty of the Rule, as it stands at present, is that the Speaker is called upon to ascertain the evident sense of the House. That is said to be very easy, as he has only to ascertain a matter of fact. But what is the state of the House at 9 or 10 o'clock at night? Where, then, really is the House? Is it within these walls, listening to the debate, or is it to be found in the Smoking Room, the Dining Room, the Library, or on the Terraces of the House; and are we to regard as the sense of the House those who have been listening to the debate or those who have been summoned by the ringing of the Division bell? At present I think a greater burden is imposed on the Speaker than would be cast upon him by the proposed new Rule. The proposal is that a Motion shall be made by an individual Member that the question be now put. It may be right to impose a limitation in regard to the Members who should make such a Motion. Some may think they should be Ministers of the Crown, Privy Counsellors, or the Movers and Seconders of Bills or Motions, or some person with responsibility, who should obtain the consent of the Speaker; but that is a point which can be discussed later on. Is it not the consent of an impartial man sitting in the Chair throughout the debates, used to the way of the House, and who has come to a deliberate conclusion that the time has arrived for closing the debate—that, in point of fact, the discussion has been exhausted. Those who saw the working of the present Rule last week will admit that it was a relief to all of us when the debate on the Address was brought to a close by the intervention of the Speaker. My right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds says that it is very easy to make

a Rule, and that the Committee last year very nearly made it; but he admits that they did not make it, and he says that he wishes to have an automatic Rule at the close of every sitting, by which, by a simple majority, an end may be put to a debate. That is not as bad as the proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) who would have this course taken on Tuesdays and Fridays—before we go to dinner at 7 o'clock; and again at midnight. I am, however, quite satisfied that such automatic Rules will not recommend themselves to the general sense of the House of Commons. I have always felt, and supported from the first, the necessity of closing debate under certain circumstances. In 1882, I said that I had some doubts about it, but that I was prepared to support it with conditions and limitations; but the closure desired by the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for South Leeds and Derby would become an act of tyranny. I am not indifferent to the rights of minorities. I have sat for 35 years in this House, and only for six years among a Party who had a majority of its own supporters. I voted for closure by a proportionate majority in 1882, and I voted for it in the Committee last year; but I am now convinced that we could not carry out the proportion of two to one which we agreed upon last year. Whether there are any other proposals which can be agreed to, I do not know; but the present Rule is not closure by simple majority, it is accompanied by the initiative of the Speaker; it has limitations as to numbers; it varies in its application to a small House or a large one. It is never likely, when a large number of Members are anxious that a debate should be continued, that the Speaker would interpose to put an end to a discussion which might be fairly prolonged. We have heard something about a defenceless minority; but hitherto we have had a defenceless majority; and only the other night the majority required protection from the minority. It is not to be regretted that the power of closure should not be of frequent application. It could not be brought into action every night, or twice a day, but only on extraordinary occasions. The right hon. Member for Derby has pointed out that the House might be taken by surprise

by a Motion being made at an unexpected hour, a thing that would be very undesirable; but perhaps the First Lord of the Treasury will be able to provide some precaution against such a contingency. With that exception, I am prepared to support the proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury. With regard to the question of devolution to Grand Committees, I think the suggestions of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds would impose a heavy additional burden on the Speaker, by requiring him to preside all day in a new Committee of Selection for constituting those Grand Committees.

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR: What I said was that the Select Committee presided over by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) found a difficulty in accepting more Committees; because the Committee of Selection found it very difficult to obtain proper Members to serve upon them; but I added that new powers might be provided for dealing with the matter.

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY: We have now a further proposition to provide a new Committee of Selection, and this, too, from a right hon. Gentleman who expresses his unwillingness to introduce new proposals, or to throw additional burdens upon the regular Committees of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has always handsomely recognized the services of the Committee of Selection; and I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds should wish to set aside the present Committee of Selection; and that he is so anxious to throw increased labour and responsibility on the Speaker by making him Chairman of a new Committee of Selection. I regret to have to differ, in however slender a degree, with the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), with whom it has been my pride and my pleasure to associate for many years. We have worked together with the same harmony and good feeling as if we had been members of the same political Party; but in his observations as to devolution last night, my hon. Friend appears to have overlooked one point. The scheme for constituting Grand Committees, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford referred, was a very perfect scheme, and I should wish

to see it worked out in future years; but it is impossible that it can be worked out this year. The hon. Member for Bedford, first of all, forgot that the Committee of last year only recommended the constitution of those large Committees, on condition that arrangements were made to relieve the House of the duty now discharged by Private Bill Committees. We are told that there is to be a Bill introduced by the Government to that effect. But is there any prospect of such an arrangement being made? It is one thing to introduce a Bill and another thing to carry it; and the hon. Member for the Partick Division of Lanarkshire (Mr. Craig-Sellar) can tell the House something of the difficulty he has encountered, when he made an attempt to move the Government on his own side of the House to take some action with respect to private Bill Legislation. Hon. Members are aware of the interests within and without the walls of Parliament which have to be overcome before such a question can be dealt with. I believe that such a work would not be accomplished in one Session, and, probably, not in two. There is also the structural difficulty to consider. The hon. Member for the Partick Division of Lanarkshire referred to the possibility of knocking two Committee-rooms into one; but the Grand Committees would consist of 170 Members, and anyone who knows the difficulties attending the fitting up of rooms to hold 80 Members will recognize the impossibility of providing rooms in the present Session large enough to accommodate such Standing Committees. There is another and very important difficulty to consider, and that is to find Chairmen for the Standing Committees. The Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means occupy exalted positions in the House, with remuneration attached to the appointments for their services; but the House would have to call upon 8 or 10 Members to sit all day, and discharge very arduous duties without any remuneration whatever for their labour. Questions of this nature must be considered before devolution bodies of the character under discussion are constituted in a hurry. I believe that my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury has done wisely in limiting the number of Committees to two, with possibly the addition of a third on Agri-

culture. The hon. Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) said something about a Grand Committee for Wales, another for Scotland, and a third for Ireland. That would give us some six or seven Grand Committees; and I should like the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale, who presided over the Select Committee, to say what his impression upon that matter is. I give generally a cordial support to the propositions of the Government. I wish, however, that I could believe they would effect their object. I confess that, while I feel compelled to support them, I do not view the result they are expected to bring about in a very sanguine temperament. The First Lord of the Treasury spoke of the pain and humiliation with which he proposed to the House these restrictions on its debates. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian will bear me out when I say that, many years ago, there existed, among hon. Members in the House, a feeling of fraternity, a courtesy and consideration from one Member towards another which I heartily wish I could see revived. In those days there was a feeling animating hon. Members of pride in the House itself—a feeling akin to that of the old Lacedæmonian, as expressed in the words — *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna*. Each Member strove, to the best of his power, to maintain the honour and the dignity of the House; and if we could revive such a spirit as that, I think it would conduce to better results than by setting down any hard-and-fast line in the regulation of debate, or than any resolution we may be able to pass. But in the present unhappy time into which we have fallen, there is nothing to be done but to give a cordial support to the proposition of the Government.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): In the few observations which I shall address to the House at this stage I hope I shall be able to discuss the question in a short space of time. Indeed, I hope that, if not a direct, at all events an indirect effect of the adoption of the Rules of Procedure we are now asked to consider may be in the direction of some shortening of the length of speeches. I do not know whether we shall be prepared to accept the suggestion of my

hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Wodehouse) in this direction; but I hope, if the House should adopt some practical method of shortening debates in general, that the adoption of that method will also have an indirect effect in the direction of shortening the length of speeches in the debate itself. The debates are now practically unlimited in length, and every hon. Member feels that he has an unlimited portion of the time of the House at his disposal, which he has as good a right to use as any other hon. Member. If, however, we can arrive at some plan which limits the length of debates, then every hon. Member in addressing the House will feel that by unduly trespassing on the time of the House he is taking away the opportunity which would belong to other hon. Members. I hope that a sense of fairness and justice on the part of hon. Members themselves may have the effect, without any direct regulation on the subject, of limiting the speeches within some shorter period. I am quite aware that I have no right to speak on the subject. Probably I am as great an offender as any hon. Member of the House; but all I can say is that I never sit down after speaking for what I considered an unduly long time without feeling that I have inflicted an injury on the House, and my aim has been to amend in that respect in future. I am not quite certain that a general discussion upon the Rules of Procedure to which so much importance was attached yesterday is an advantage. I cannot say that in the discussion, so far as it has gone, there seems to be any great desire on the part of hon. Members to look at the plan as a whole, or to take any wide or general view of it. On the contrary, there has been a disposition to dwell upon details of the plan which, however we may discuss them now, we shall have to discuss over again when we come to consider the Amendments. I doubt very much, therefore, whether much time has been gained in discussing the Rules as a whole before coming to the Amendments. In 1882 it was not considered advisable to have any general preliminary discussion; and certainly in 1882 the Rules about to be proposed by the Government raised more novel principles than anything which is contained in the present Rules. The subjects which have been directly referred to in

the course of the debate have been the closure and the intervention of the Chair, and the subject of devolution. As regards the closure, my own opinion has always been, since I became convinced of the necessity of limiting the length of debates—a conviction which I formed six or seven years ago—in favour of adopting the most simple and most practical form of giving the House that control over the length of its discussions. I agree with a great deal of what fell from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) last night. Personally, I have not the slightest apprehension as to the probability that the power of the closure would be abused. I do not think I am subject to the panic fears about which my right hon. Friend spoke. I think it would not be to the advantage of a majority to abuse the power of closure, however stringent and however drastic that power might be. I believe that what would be considered in the country an unfair use of the power of closing debate would act injuriously upon the majority's own cause, and that there would be no temptation on the part of the majority, even a somewhat intolerant majority, to resort to unfair means of suppressing debate. Further, I believe, with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), that in the Assemblies where the simple form of closure has been adopted, and where Party spirit is certainly quite as prevalent as among us, and where passions are rife, it has not in practice been found that the power of closure or limiting the length of debates has been abused. Therefore, I still maintain the opinion I have always personally held on this subject—that it is not necessary to surround the use of the closing of debate by so many limitations and restrictions as the timidity of some hon. Members seems to suggest. Personally, I should not be in the least afraid to see a system of closure voted by a bare majority without any intervention on the part of the Chair, and limited only by the presence of what might be considered to be a sufficient quorum. I have always, at the same time, endeavoured to regard the subject more from a practical point of view than from the point of view of abstract principle. I think our object ought to be to endeavour to obtain not that system of closure

which in our opinion may be absolutely the best, but that which will commend itself most fully to the general and prevailing opinion of the House, and to obtain that system which the House will be most disposed to make use of, and to acquiesce in the use of, when adopted, rather than to obtain that form of closure which may most commend itself to our own individual opinions. Now, what are the alternative forms of the closure which have been suggested or can be suggested for our consideration? There is, in the first place, closure by a bare majority without any intervention from the Chair, which is advocated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby. But my right hon. Friend did not venture himself to propose that system of closure in the Resolution which he laid upon the Table last year. The closure which he proposed was the only one which was to come into operation at the end of each Sitting. Now, that appears to me to be a very inadequate, and not altogether logical, form of Procedure. It seems to me to be somewhat unreasonable that it should be in the power of a bare majority at the close of a Sitting to put an end to a debate on, perhaps, a very important question, while it would not be in the power of that majority to stop a minority, however small, which might be wasting the whole time of the House in one Sitting on what might be a very trivial matter and a comparatively unimportant issue. Now, my right hon. Friend will tell me that the suggestions he laid before the Committee last year emanated not only from himself, but from a small Committee which sat occasionally at Devonshire House last year. I think my right hon. Friend laid too much stress upon that preliminary examination. I certainly do not desire to evade any responsibility which may attach to me for the part I took in that preliminary discussion; but I was not a party to any of the preliminary proposals, which I thought were in principle objectionable. But I never understood—and I do not think my right hon. Friend, or any of us who met there, understood—that we were thereby committing ourselves irrevocably to any set of proposals, irrespective of further discussion or the result of further consideration. I do not think that in what took place in regard to the preliminary discussions any of us were

prevented from stating our views or advocating some modification of what was proposed as the result of this consideration and discussion. Then I come back again to closure by a bare majority. It is useful to refer to the critical Division on this point which took place in the Select Committee of last year. That critical Division turned practically on the question whether safeguards or restrictions were to be imposed upon the closure by a bare majority; and my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, with whom I admit I should have gone, if I had voted, was defeated in that Division by a majority of 20 to 12. Now, it is necessary to consider what was the composition of that minority and of that majority. The minority which supported my right hon. Friend was entirely composed of hon. Gentlemen who now sit in this part of the House; and the majority of 20, by which it was decided that safeguards of some kind were to be provided, consisted of 13 Conservatives, three Liberals, and four, being the whole, of the Irish Members who were on the Committee. I believe that the vote of the majority very accurately represented, so far as I can judge, the opinions of the House at the time. I believe it was a tolerably accurate representation of the feeling of the last House of Commons upon this subject. And certainly the present House of Commons would take a still stronger objection to the imposition of closure by a bare majority without safeguards of any kind. My right hon. Friend must be aware that in such a proposal he would only have the support of a certain number of hon. Gentlemen who sit on this side of the House. He knows that a certain proportion of hon. Gentlemen who sit opposite are opposed to any such form of closure, and that the Irish Members are also opposed to it. Therefore, it seems to me that it would not have been a practical course on the part of Her Majesty's Government, even if they had themselves inclined to it, to have proposed closure by a bare majority without safeguards of any description. Now, the next alternative which the Government might have adopted was the closure by a proportional majority. I am of opinion that that is open to still stronger objections on principle. I have on former occasions argued against the principle of pro-

portional majority, and I retain the objections which I expressed in 1882; but I am perfectly willing to admit that, in spite of the objections I entertain, if I had thought there was any probability of general concurrence on the part of a large majority of the House in such a system I should have been quite prepared to waive the objections I felt, and to have accepted such a solution. But I understand my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby and the great majority of hon. Gentlemen who sit in this part of the House are absolutely opposed on principle to the adoption of the closure by a proportional majority in any form, and if it had been proposed by the Government it would have led to a strict Party conflict upon the point. I think it would have been very impolitic under the circumstances if the Government had proposed that course. I think we are bound to avoid, if possible, raising questions which must necessarily excite strict Party divisions in this House, and therefore the Government are right in discarding a proportional majority. There appears to be only one alternative left, and that was the adoption of some system of numbers voting in the majority such as comes under the present Rule. I cannot say I consider that to be an entirely satisfactory system. I think that the numbers are far too large, and that the difficulties which are imposed in the way of the fulfilment of the wish of the House are greatly impeded and too much restricted by the numbers which have been adopted. But while that is so it still appears to me, on the whole, to be the system which is likely to command the largest amount of assent and acquiescence, although not a unanimous assent and acquiescence on the part of the House. The principle of closure by a bare majority, for which my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby contends, is contained in the Rule as it stands; but, at the same time the Government appear to be unwilling or afraid to entrust the power of closure to a limited number of Members, and, therefore, the Rule requires that a large number of Members shall be present before the closure is passed. I come then, lastly, on this point to the provision as to the consent of the Chair. My right hon. Friend said that that was unanimously rejected by the Committee.

Now, I cannot recollect—I cannot certainly find it in the proceedings—that that point was actually discussed in the Committee. It was not raised as far as I can recollect, and I think the Committee had no opportunity of giving an opinion or of discussing the question. It was not raised by the proposal of my right hon. Friend, nor by any of the alternative proposals placed before the Committee. Therefore, I cannot attach so much importance as my right hon. Friend does to the absence of any recommendation on that subject by the Committee. But even if the Committee had arrived at that conclusion I do not think my right hon. Friend would be justified in attaching so much importance to it as he does, because, if the opinion of the Committee was absolutely right as to one point, he thought it arrived at an absolutely wrong opinion on another. When the question of a proportional majority came up he was so strongly opposed to it that he divided the Committee against the whole Resolution and declined to take any further responsibility for the recommendation of the Committee with regard to closure at all. It has been said that these proposals throw upon the Chair a new and very onerous responsibility. I am unable to agree with that view of the case. The present Rule appears to me to throw upon the Speaker a greater responsibility than is now proposed. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) said last night that the Speaker, under the present Rule, was only called upon to pronounce a decision upon a question of fact, and that he was not called upon to pronounce an opinion. Now, the Speaker, under the present Rule, has not only to form a judgment upon the evident sense of the House, but he is only to act—

“When it shall appear to Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means, or a Committee of the Whole House, during any Debate, that the subject has been adequately discussed.”

That is not a question of fact, but a question on which he is bound to form his own judgment and opinion. Such is the present Rule, and it appears to me to cast a very great responsibility upon the Speaker. The responsibility that is cast upon him by the proposed alteration seems to me to be less onerous. It is said the Speaker will only be able to

act on the demand or on the appeal of the majority of the House. Now I cannot take that view. It seems to me that if the Speaker, under the proposed Rule, takes the responsibility of action upon himself it will be not so much on the demand of the majority as in the interest of and in the protection of a minority. Then there is one other point which I think ought to be considered, and I am afraid that it is one that will be classed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby as one of those “wretched details” for which he expressed so great a contempt last night. I want to know how, unless some provision to that effect be inserted, it is proposed to prevent the power of demanding the closure being used by a small minority of the House for factious purposes? Without some provision of this kind it would be in the power of a small minority constantly to interrupt an important debate by moving that the debate be brought to a close, even although an overwhelming majority of the House might be against them. I quite admit that that may be a “wretched detail;” but, however small and contemptible my right hon. Friend may think the details, some of them, at all events, are details of a practical character, which it is necessary for us to consider and to deal with unless we are to be landed in still greater difficulties. It is probable that at a later period of the discussion we may hear either from the Speaker or from the Leader of the House the interpretation which they place upon the duty which it is proposed to confer by this Rule upon the Chair, and that some further intimation may be given to us; but I submit that whatever may be the interpretation to be placed upon these provisions by Her Majesty’s Government or by the Speaker, it is not possible that it should be an extension of the power or the responsibility that now rests upon him, but to some extent, at all events, a limitation of the responsibility which he at present bears. Now I will only say a few words further upon the subject of devolution. I quite admit that I should have preferred some system of devolution such as that indicated in the Report of the Committee of last year to the present proposals of Her Majesty’s Government, and I hope that before long it may be possible for the House to arrive at some system of division of labour applied to

its Committee works, both as regards legislation and as regards Supply. At the same time I am bound to admit that the plan which the Committee laid before the House was, in many respects, an incomplete and imperfect plan, which could not possibly be submitted by the Government to the consideration of the House in the form in which it appeared. As Chairman of that Committee, I may, perhaps, be permitted to say a word or two as to the difficulties under which that Committee sat. During almost the whole time of our proceedings the House was engaged in the consideration of the most exciting question which has come before it for many years. Our deliberations were almost coincident with the debates on the Irish Government plan of the late Government; and under the circumstances I think that the House will hardly be very much surprised to hear that the Committee very frequently found it somewhat difficult to give a very continuous and patient attention to the questions that were brought before them. The conclusion of our labours took place after the final Division upon that measure had taken place, and when it was known that the duration of Parliament would be an extremely short one it became exceedingly difficult for the Committee to pay much attention to matters of this kind at all. With regard to the proposals for Standing Committees we spent a great deal of time over them, and we were obliged to adjourn for further consideration certain points connected with them until towards the close of our proceedings; and when that time came it was, as I have said, difficult for the Committee to devote continuous attention to the work. There are, therefore, many points which remain undecided, some of them minor points and some of great and cardinal importance. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University (Sir John Mowbray), who has just sat down, has referred to two or three of these questions. In the first place, he said he did not believe that there is accommodation in this House for three or four Committees of 160 Members each. No recommendation has been made upon the subject. The Committee, for instance, never considered the procedure of these Standing Committees, the powers of the Chairman, or the mode in which Divisions were to be taken.

All those subjects would have to be thoroughly considered and threshed out before the House could be asked by the Government to adopt such a scheme as was indicated, and only indicated, in the Report of the Committee. The Procedure of these Committees was a most important question. If they were to be on the same footing as Select Committees, and to have no special power of closing a debate, then, instead of being an assistance to legislation, it is quite possible that obstruction of a measure would be more easy and more fatal than even in a Committee of the House itself. Then, again, the question is a very important one whether divisions are to be taken on the spur of the moment, when Members of the Committee might be in another part of the House, or whether Notice should be given. These points are of great importance, because, unless they are decided, it may be found that great practical inconvenience would result. I will not, however, dwell upon these points; the principal ones which the Committee left undecided referred to the Estimates and to the Private Bill Business of the House. The Committee arrived at the decision at an early period, on the Motion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), that the Estimates should be referred to a Standing Committee "in the manner hereinafter described." The proceedings were subsequently adjourned, in order that that manner should be considered by my right hon. Friend, who represented the Government at that time; but no proposal ever was adopted or brought before the Committee, except the proposal which I brought forward myself—and which, I believe, had the support of my right hon. Friend—but which was rejected by the Committee. Therefore, the Committee, having laid down that the Estimates were to be referred "in manner hereinafter described," declined to sanction any mode by which they could be referred, and the proposal dropped out of the recommendations of the Committee altogether. My right hon. Friend says that the Committee embodied in its Report an expression of opinion that it was essential that some other mode than the existing one should be adopted for disposing of the Private Bill Business of the House. No proposals on that subject ever came before the Committee. I

understand that proposals are going to be made by Her Majesty's Government in the present year; but although those proposals may be made, they may not be adopted, and it would have been a waste of the time of the House if the Government had invited the House to consider an elaborate system of delegation to Standing Committees, which, after all, might be brought to a standstill by the failure of the Government to provide a satisfactory system for dealing with Private Bill legislation, it having been stated by the Committee that the preliminary difficulties were insuperable. This imperfection—this incompleteness of our representations—do not appear to me to constitute, in any degree whatever, any permanent obstacle to the extension of the system of devolution; and I hope that when the House has time it will devote its attention to the consideration of this subject, and will be disposed to adopt some more complete system of devolution than the present system of Grand Committees. I hardly think, however, that the system of Grand Committees, proposed a few years ago, has had a fair trial. They only sat during one Session, and I think it was admitted that one of them performed his duty in a satisfactory manner. I think it is rather soon to dismiss the system of Grand Committees because one of them did not accomplish such satisfactory results as might have been expected; and I think that any further experience which might be gained by their re-appointment would be useful if the House desired to proceed to a more complete system of devolution. In my opinion, therefore, the proposals of the Government, if adopted by the House, will not in any sense whatever constitute the rejection, or even the permanent postponement, of the principle of devolution; but I consider that their proposals are made necessary by the condition and the circumstances in which we find ourselves at the present time. I have not ventured to enter in much detail into those subjects, as I think that no possible advantage could be gained by doing so. I do not think, in the preliminary discussion in which we are engaged, it is possible to enter into the consideration of details which may more easily be raised hereafter. Therefore, I will not detain the House by considering them now. All I

desire to say before I sit down is that I trust the House will not think it necessary to spend a very large portion of its time upon this general discussion. I do not think that any very important or very novel principle is raised by the proposals of the Government; they are in the nature rather of an Amendment of Rules involving much more important considerations which were adopted by the House a few years ago, and which have been shown by the experience we have since gained to require amendment. I trust that, after due and not too prolonged consideration, these Rules will be found to be an improvement on the existing system, and that they will be of assistance in the progress of Public Business. Certainly, I think that from the lines on which this debate has proceeded we may hope that these Rules will be considered in a fair and impartial spirit by, at all events, the great majority of the House, and that we shall not deem it necessary to intrude into this debate any considerations of a Party or of a personal character.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): As a comparatively new Member of the House, I feel that I stand in need of the indulgence of the House when I intervene in this debate at all, and especially when I venture to follow the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John R. Mowbray), who have spoken on this question with so much authority. But I think the House will concede—and perhaps Her Majesty's Government will concede—that it is not undesirable that some of the less experienced Members should briefly lay before the House some of the difficulties and considerations which occur to them in regard to these proposed Rules of Procedure. The two points upon which I desire to say a few words are, in the first place, the intervention of the Speaker; and, secondly, the question of devolution. I think I may say that there are a great many hon. Members on this side of the House who feel that the question of the intervention of the Speaker is a very much more serious one than it was allowed to be by the First Lord of the Treasury in supporting the Resolution of the Government the other day. I am quite ready to admit that

[Second Night.]

on reading the proposed Rules I did not think the addition to the existing Standing Order No. 14 was one which would do much harm—indeed, on first reading it, it occurred to me that it might be an improvement; but on further consideration I have been led entirely to change that opinion. I think that any hon. Member of this House who recalls to his mind the incidents which occurred within the last few days when the Chair had to intervene at a period of no particular excitement will be led to the conclusion that we ought to watch with the utmost jealousy any attempt to throw a heavier burden upon the Chair. I have no doubt that every hon. Member of this House will be steady in his loyalty to the Chair; but this House is not the whole country, and I think that if we reflect upon the conversations we have heard within the last few days, and upon the injurious comments which we read in the Press, we must come to the conclusion that it is very desirable that this House should have regard to the dignity of the Chair in this particular. Now, Sir, there is one point in these Rules to which I think attention has not been sufficiently called by previous speakers, and upon which, therefore, I should like to say a word. It is this—the difference which is made by introducing into the Rules a fixed hour for the termination of debate. That proposal affects the question of closure in a very particular manner. The same Rule which might be suitable and sufficient for closure when there is no fixed hour for the determination of debate, in my humble judgment ceases to be equally applicable when a fixed hour for the termination of debate is proposed. The reason why I say this is because, when you have a fixed hour for the termination of debate, it may be said that the question of closure more or less inevitably arises every night. The Rules proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and reported upon by the Select Committee last year, were intended, I think, as I read them at first, to retain both methods of closure, because the Standing Order No. 14 was not proposed to be repealed in the Report of the Select Committee. In the Rules laid on the Table by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) various

Standing Orders were proposed to be repealed; but in the Report of the Select Committee there was no proposal to repeal Standing Order 14, and until it was otherwise interpreted by the noble Marquess the Chairman of the Committee, I thought it was intended that both methods should stand together.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I am afraid that I have failed to make myself understood. The hon. Gentleman is practically correct. Under the recommendation of the Select Committee of last year both systems of closure would have remained in operation.

MR. D. CRAWFORD: Then I was right in my original interpretation. It is very important to know that both systems of closure were proposed to be left in operation; and I submit to the House that whereas the mode of closure in Standing Order 14 and that proposed by the Government and laid on the Table in the present Rules might be applicable and sufficient, and unobjectionable as applied to the ordinary course of debate, the matter is quite otherwise at the end of debate, when the question of closure must, more or less, arise every night. I say that it is too much to throw on the Speaker the duty, or that he should be asked at the close of every evening to form an opinion as to whether a subject has been sufficiently debated or whether it is desirable to put the Question to the House. If the House comes to the conclusion the Government asks it to arrive at, that there shall be a fixed hour for the termination of debate, the proper sequence of that would be that at the end of each evening there should be an automatic closure; and I submit that on that question the sense of the House by a simple majority should be taken. On that point I venture to agree, in substance, with the view expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair). According to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, as far as I understand it, on a Motion being moved by anybody that the Question should be put by the Chair, a Division would be taken without discussion on the question. Well, I think an even more simple plan would be better. Perhaps it is a small matter, but it seems a somewhat irregular and anomalous idea that the Chair should in any case act until moved. There could

Mr. D. Crawford

be no compulsion on the majority or on the Government to move the Chair to take that course, so that the action of the House would not be strictly automatic, as, in my opinion, it ought to be. It would be better, I think, at the end of each evening to provide that the Question under discussion should be put by the Chair—that would require no Motion—unless a Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate had been previously made. If a Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate had been moved then a Division would be taken on it without Amendment, and in that way automatic closure would be arrived at; or, if the Motion were carried, the House would decide that it was desirable to continue the discussion on the next day. I wish to point out that if that course were taken some of the objections stated by the noble Marquess and the right hon. Gentleman opposite to automatic closure in any form would be obviated; because there could be no surprise in such a case, and no necessity for providing either for a quorum or a proportionate majority, or any other artificial devices of that kind, for any hon. Member interested in the Business of the House would know that the question, in some shape or form, would have to be decided at 12 o'clock at night, and could, if he thought proper, be in his place to take part in the decision. As to the application of the closure during the currency of debate either in the House or in Committee, I think it is a most important fact that the Committee presided over by the noble Marquess proposed that this closure should be entirely distinct from closure at the end of the Sitting, and dealt with differently. I have no objection to that; and I would even desire that some kind of closure of that sort should be provided. It would be rarely put in force at all, and I should be perfectly satisfied if Standing Order 14 is allowed to remain as it is, and the action of the Chair is taken spontaneously, or for that description of closure I should not object to adopt the Rule proposed by the Government. I hope I have made myself clear on that point; and now I wish to say a word on the subject of devolution. The right hon. Baronet (Sir John R. Mowbray) and the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) have no doubt pointed out, with considerable

force, the difficulties that would attend the promulgation of a system of devolution at this moment. I think the House would have had a great deal more indulgence for these difficulties if the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had stated, when he introduced the Rules, that he was desirous to overcome them, and determined ultimately to overcome them and make a complete devolution. He has not, however, done so. The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) spoke last night with something approaching to enthusiasm of a Committee of the Whole House. According to the right hon. Gentleman, the House of Commons never appears to so great advantage as when it is in Committee of the Whole House. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman has a very good right to speak on that point, and it may be that the days when he was Chairman of Committees were the halcyon days of the House; but, admitting all the advantages of the system of Committees of the Whole House—admitting the truth of the right hon. Gentleman's contention that a good Committee is formed by the process of natural selection—it is perfectly plain that we cannot overtake the Business committed to our hands. I sometimes think it possible that the Government were deterred from making more satisfactory proposals on that head by the idea that a more complete system of devolution might not be entirely palatable even to hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House. If, however, we are to have the hours of sitting shortened, it is absolutely necessary that some division of labour should take place. I think, with my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), that we ought not to have such gigantic Committees as of 160 Members. It is difficult to say, judging from experience, what amount of obstruction we might have in such Committees, or how far they would be found to be workable, and I cannot help thinking that Committees of a much more moderate size would be more desirable. I apologize for having intruded upon the attention of the House for so long a time, having so little experience in its Business; but I join very warmly and earnestly in hoping that the eloquent appeal made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir John R. Mowbray) to the best traditions of this House in former days will

[*Second Night.*]

be responded to by all hon. Members, and that we may pass a set of Rules which will restore the ancient efficiency of this Assembly.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Mr. Speaker, I admire the candour of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John Mowbray) when he said that, although he is willing to give a cordial and enthusiastic support to these Rules, he thinks they will do no good. I confess I am more sanguine than the right hon. Gentleman. I think these Rules contain very valuable recommendations; at the same time, I hope I may be allowed—certainly in no Party spirit—to criticize fairly and freely some points involved. I shall confine myself to two points—namely, the question of closure, and the question of devolution of the Business of the House. Eight or nine years ago, when it was considered almost un-English even to mention the name of closure or *clôture*—as it was then called—I expressed myself in favour of such a system; and certainly, if I was in favour of it eight years ago, I do not think it is likely that I should have changed my opinion now. I am glad that the Government put this closure in the forefront of their Rules, because, as has been observed by more than one speaker, several other Rules hang upon it, such, for instance, as the fourth and fifth Rules, which relate to the duration of Sittings and the interruption of debates. Without the closure it would be possible for Members speaking against time at Sittings of limited duration to prevent any decision being arrived at at all. Now, I quite agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) that the question of the hours of sitting is a most important one. As a matter of fact, we keep the most disreputable hours of any Assembly in the world. We begin our Business when most reasonable men leave off, and we leave off when most-sensible people have been in bed for three or four hours. It is all very well for young men, like the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), to advise us to lengthen our days by stealing a few hours from the night; but most middle-aged English Members cannot afford to lead the lives of owls and bats and night porters. When I think of what I went through when I

occupied a seat on the Treasury Bench for five or six years, I am almost astonished I am living now to tell the tale. I remember a physician, whom I had occasion to consult once, saying to me—"You live in defiance of all the laws of Nature, and yet you come here and expect me to make you well. Change your habits, and then you will not want to come here." Over and over again I have left my house at 11 o'clock in the morning and not returned to it till 3 o'clock in the following morning. What Members of the House have to pass through reminds me of an over-worked member of the Legal Profession, who once said he liked the Long Vacation because it enabled him to make the acquaintance of his wife and family. But coming directly to the question of *clôture* or closure, I have never been able to understand why it should not be applied at the will of a bare majority. A bare majority is quite competent to say whether a law shall be passed or not; and I cannot see why a similar majority is not competent to decide the much less important question whether a matter has been sufficiently discussed or not. At the same time, I cannot see that it makes any practical difference whether we have a bare majority, or a two-thirds majority, or even a three-quarters majority, because I am quite certain that closure would never be imposed unless those who called for it were much more than a bare majority. At the same time, I do not like these highly artificial checks about 200, or 100, or 40 Members, which it almost requires a Cambridge mathematician to calculate. I believe that the real safeguards of a minority are not to be found in such checks as these, but are to be found in public opinion. One would think we had not got such a thing as public opinion or a free Press. I am perfectly certain that if any Minister, or any Member of the majority, were to attempt to enforce these Rules in a tyrannical or oppressive way the act would recoil upon himself, and he would not attempt it twice. Indeed, I cannot imagine a better weapon being put into the hands of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the Irish Members than that they should be able to go to Ireland and say they had been prevented from debating a really important matter by the action

of the majority. Now, there is one point which certainly requires explanation, and that is how the consent of the Speaker is to be obtained—how a Member is to move that the Question be put. Will he be required to stand up in his place and make the Motion, or will he be allowed to creep behind the Speaker and, as it were, earwig the Chair? I do not much like the division of responsibility; but, in any case, I trust we shall know, before we come to the discussion of the first Rule, how the consent of the Chair is to be obtained. Now, upon the question of devolution, I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) that the present remedy for the congested state of Business is only skin deep. What we want is a much more drastic remedy. I took the trouble last week to reckon the number of Public Bills at present before the House. They actually amounted to 175; and I have no doubt that the cry is still they come, and that by this time there will be several more. Of these 175 Bills, 59 were Scotch and Irish Bills, nearly 20 were Metropolitan or Welsh Bills, or Bills relating to Cornwall or other parts of the United Kingdom. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork was, therefore, perfectly right in saying that we are doing the work of three or four Legislatures. Does the House know how many of these 175 Bills could, by any stretch of the word, be called Agriculture, Trade, or Law Bills, and therefore be capable of being referred to the three Standing Committees proposed by these Rules? Only 24—that is to say, only one in seven. Therefore, I maintain that to attempt to relieve the congested Business of the House by such a process as that is very much like attempting to bale out a water-logged vessel with half-a-dozen teaspoons. I very much prefer the suggestion of the hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone)—namely, that we should have a Committee dealing with Irish questions, another dealing with Scotch questions, another dealing with Welsh questions. There is one thing, however, I can assure the Government of, and that is that nothing in the nature of Party opposition or factious opposition will be offered to these Rules from this Bench. I speak on this point most confidently for my-

self, and I hope I may speak equally confidently for those who sit near me. The question before the House is far too important. It is not a question of Party politics; it is a question of the efficiency of the House—nay, more, of the character of the House. I am often asked why is not progress made with such and such a measure in the House of Commons, and I can only say in answer that in the House of Commons progress is made with nothing. People are beginning to find that out, and it is telling very seriously against the reputation of the House, and I fear that before very long it may affect the character of the Members sent here. At present we boast that, in some shape or other, we do get here thoroughly representative men—we get the cream of the nation—all kinds of representative men; merchants and lawyers; employers of labour and working men; sons of Peers and sons of toil; but how long will that continue to be the case if Members find that when they come here they have to sit twiddling their thumbs for six or seven hours, or yawning over papers in the Reading or Smoking Rooms? If that is the case, the best men will not want to come here at all, or if they do come here they will very soon wish to leave. These Rules contain some excellent suggestions; and I can assure the Leader of the House that, while I shall criticize them fairly, I shall give them, as a whole, my hearty support.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): Mr. Speaker, I must apologize for rising at all in this debate; but, as I take some interest in the efficiency of the House, I may be allowed, notwithstanding my limited experience, to make a few observations. I cannot help saying that on the first day of the Session I was very much surprised that the most important Business of the day was postponed for two hours, because the Clerk at the Table had to go through the pantomime of balloting for papers. That the time of this House should be taken up in work which is so purely perfunctory, and which could be as well performed in another room of this House by the clerks themselves with proper restrictions, seems to me to be exceedingly ludicrous. If the Ballot is to continue and to be of service at all it is quite evident that some reform is necessary. To me the present system of

[Second Night.]

balloting appears in itself a most clumsy and most unsatisfactory way of revising and arranging the list of Motions which this House proposes to discuss. So long as it was the custom for each Member in this House to ballot for a place for the Motion in which he was interested, it was also fair and right that the Motions should be distributed over the Session by a process so neutral as the process of balloting; but it was a long time since discovered that it was easy indeed to get behind this simple method, and by 40 or 50 Members balloting for one Motion the system became a mere farce; and it is felt now to be a farce which tells unduly against Members who use the Ballot fairly, and simply ballot for the particular Motion in which they themselves happen to be interested. Like every other Legislative Body, this House ought to have some means or power of arranging the Motions on the Paper in something like the order in which they interest the great proportion of the House; in other words, that the time of this House should not be taken up in discussing trivial matters which are only of interest to a few hon. Members.

MR. SPEAKER: I must call the hon. Member's attention to the fact that he is not now discussing anything that is in the Rules proposed to be laid before the House, and, further, that this is in the nature of a second reading debate. It is not, therefore, the occasion for going into detail on the subject of an Amendment which I see stands in the hon. Member's own name. It is hardly permissible on the general Question for the hon. Member to continue his present line of argument.

MR. HOWORTH: I must ask the pardon of the House; it is entirely owing to my ignorance of the Forms of the House that I have at all transgressed. Mr. Speaker, I was particularly struck by the extremely fair way in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) approached this question. I thought he exaggerated some of the difficulties; but that altogether his statement was not only extremely lucid, but extremely fair and judicial. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the difficulty that has arisen in the House in consequence of the Forms of the House, as interpreted by yourself, not allowing a de-

bate upon any question in regard to which a Notice of Motion is already on the Paper. Before these Rules are passed something will have to be devised to get over this difficulty. It seems to me that if it is the general sense of the House that any particular Motion on the Paper has been put there for obstructive purposes and for preventing a rational and reasonable discussion of a subject, the general opinion of the House may be given expression to, and that, in that way, a discussion upon the subject in question might be secured. I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) that a form of *clôture* which will work automatically is likely to succeed, for an automatic *clôture* must work numerous injustices to the minority. We, on these Benches, feel that the best judge as to whether a minority has been sufficiently heard is the person who has to preside over our proceedings; and I cannot help feeling that in the Speaker hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have the best of friends. The Speaker is the man who has to decide whether a minority, such as that which the Irish Members form, have had sufficient time and opportunity of stating their case fully and fairly; and if you have any system of *clôture* which works by mere numbers or automatically and mechanically, without the interference of the Speaker, it must invariably tend to the disadvantage of any small, or even large, minority in the House. It is for this reason, among others, that I feel the position taken up by the Government is quite unassailable. Whatever system you adopt, you must, undoubtedly, have difficulties. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was quite right when he emphasized the fact that it is a danger against which we must always guard that the Chair should even be suspected of being friendly to one section or Party in the House. The danger arises a great deal more under the Rule of *Clôture* now imposed than it can possibly arise under the new Rule of *Clôture*, which takes away from the Speaker the initiative, and places it with Members of the House. The present proposal certainly relieves the Speaker of a burden of a very serious kind indeed. It has been asked how the opinion of the Speaker is to be ob-

Mr. Howorth

tained. The opinion of the Speaker is to be obtained now, and it can be obtained by any private Member who ventures to move the closure of the debate. No one who has any regard for himself or for his position would venture to consult the Speaker unless his position was so absolutely plain that the Speaker would have very little difficulty in deciding. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian enlarged upon the question of the devolution of the Business of the House; and it is quite evident that we must presently invent some more elastic system of devolution, by which the congested condition of the Business of this House may be, in some measure, relieved. The difficulties hitherto have arisen, not about the theory, but about the putting the theory into practice. The French Bureau system works very admirably; and if it were not for the continual interference of Private Bill Business with the course of the general work of the House, I cannot help thinking that we should do well in carrying out very largely the system which the French Legislature has found so convenient. I have detained the House too long already, and I thank them for the patience with which they have listened to me.

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I must apologize, as a new Member, for trespassing on the attention of the House on an occasion like the present. The question of Procedure is one of great importance, and one which ought to be considered with great care and attention; and for this reason I venture to offer a few remarks. I think the *clôture* ought to be imposed by a bare majority of this House. I never understood what objection there could be to such a system. It is said that it can trample upon a minority. No doubt, sometimes minorities have rights; but they have not in all cases, and this is one of the particular instances in which a minority has no right at all. While we have a system of Party Government, and while we hold the Government responsible to the country for the Business of this House, we ought to entrust them with the fullest powers possible. There ought not to be any want of confidence on our part, and no Minister dare abuse his power for a single instant.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) last night mentioned the fact of M. Gambetta being the object of the application of the *clôture* in France; but the right hon. Gentleman did not bring forward any evidence at all that anyone in France, or that the French people in general, suffered by the suppression of the speech of M. Gambetta. Now, with regard to the question of Grand Committees, it has been admitted on both sides of the House that there must be devolution of the Business in some way or other. Some years ago Grand Committees on Trade and Law were formed, and, at the time, they answered their purposes very well; but I submit that such Committees will not suit the altered necessities of the present time. We really ought to have four Committees—one to deal with the affairs of Wales, and another with the affairs of Scotland, another with the affairs of Ireland, and the fourth with the affairs of India. Until some such system as I suggest is adopted we shall find that the local affairs of these countries will never receive the amount of attention and consideration they require. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John Mowbray) considers that more than two Grand Committees would be unworkable; but he confined his remarks to Grand Committees of 160 Members. Why should we have such large Committees; why not have Committees of 100 or say 50 Members? I was glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) yesterday that the Government intended to give up the present system of Private Bill legislation. There is no doubt at all that Private Bill legislation has been one of the scandals of the present system for a long time past. Only the other day a discussion was raised in this House upon a Bill relating to the maintenance of roads in Orkney. I was required to vote on that Bill and did vote; but I must confess that I have not the faintest idea what the effect of my vote will be. There are some matters which cannot be managed locally; but a great majority of matters—those relating to gas, water, and drainage, and other similar matters—can and ought to be dealt with locally. The case of short railways, for instance, ought to be dealt with in the county in

which the railway is to be constructed. Of course, in the case of long railways passing through a great many counties the question involved is one of national interest, and must be dealt with in the National Chamber. Now, it is suggested in these Rules that the House should adjourn for an hour and a-half for dinner. I am strongly opposed to such a proposition. There is an idea in some parts of the country that we are too much of a club or a fashionable debating society, and that impression should be removed. If we were to sit here steadily on and take dinner as we were able, we should give a pledge to the country that we did not regard the House of Commons merely as a fashionable club, but that we came here to look after the affairs of the nation. I am sorry that it is not proposed to place some limitation upon the length of the speeches of Members. There is no doubt that most of the time that is wasted in this House is wasted by Members speaking at inordinate length; I think 20 minutes is sufficient time for one Member to occupy by a speech, and I would go so far as to make this a test question with candidates at Parliamentary Elections. I believe that if this House earnestly and determinedly sets to work to reform the Procedure of the House it will recover for itself that esteem in the country which at the present time it has lost altogether. The proceedings in this House have become more or less a scandal; and when I referred to minorities just now, I know that one section of the House considers itself affected very seriously by these Rules. But has that part of the House any claim in particular on our sympathies? If they cannot get their wish on any particular question, how do they meet us? Why, by the suggestion of the sweet and persuasive influence of dynamite.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to speak in that way of any section of the House.

MR. COGHILL: I beg to withdraw the observation if it is not in Order. In conclusion, I cannot help saying that if these Rules are passed and enforced with determination we shall discharge the Business of the House in a way which will be much more satisfactory to all Members of the House, and to the electors who have sent us here to watch and protect their interests.

Mr Coghill

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that in dealing with the question of closure many of us must be open to the charge of having materially changed our opinions during the last few years. Of late we have had considerable experience, and we feel that, though we regret the necessity for this change, there is no alternative, in addition to which, if there be one mandate which has been given to us by our constituents, it is that we should substitute in this House, if possible, work for words, and that we should again restore to it the dignity it once possessed; that in, effect, we should no longer say—

“Ours is the praise of standing still,
And doing nothing with a deal of skill.”

I hope, Sir, that this question of Procedure will be solved in a permanent and practical way; the question is one which primarily belongs to the Government. The Government is responsible primarily for the conduct of the Business of this House; and though some of us may differ on certain points from the proposals which have been made to the House, we should not feel justified in risking some solution of the difficulties in which the House is placed by interposing strongly private notions as opposed to those which have been formulated by the Government. It is for this reason I accept without rebuke the principle of the closure by a bare majority, as proposed by the Government. We have, at any rate, the satisfaction of knowing that even now the application of the closure will be controlled and modified by the action of the Speaker, so that it will not be a mere simple closure; but there will be, at least, one check which we believe will be placed in hands which will deal with it to the satisfaction of the House. I think we understand that while the Government are anxious to carry in principle the proposals which they make private Members on both sides of the House should contribute suggestively as much as possible to the solution of the question at present before the House. I hope that opinions will be freely expressed from both sides of the House. I heard with great satisfaction the expression of opinion by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), that it is more important to solve this question to the

satisfaction of the general body of Members than to solve it upon any particular plan whatever; and if the result of this debate should be to pass Resolutions which meet with general acceptance I think the Government—as I think they will be—will be wise and practical enough to accept the situation. If that result be achieved, we may make a new departure without applying the *clôture*, in which all parties will endeavour to put aside those principles of resistance and delay which unfortunately have marked the character of the House lately, and endeavour to do legislative work which shall be permanently beneficial to the nation. Acting, then, on this principle, may I venture to criticize one or two words in the first Resolution proposed by the First Lord of the Treasury? I take some exception to the words, “the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained.” I should like to know, with others, how the consent of the Chair is to be obtained; if it is to be obtained by private approaches to the Chair, it is open to very considerable objection. For instance, it will be in the power of any hon. Member to make a private approach instead of approaching the Chair from his seat in the House. That would be to give to the Speaker a position which ought never to be occupied by him. It would place him in an alliance with a private Member, a partizanship to which the Chair ought not to be liable. I suggest that instead of the words, “the consent of the Speaker having been previously obtained,” we should adopt the ordinary formula—namely, “with the consent of the Speaker.” I think that the previous consent of the Speaker need not be regarded as essential, and that the Speaker should have distinctly isolated and defined functions in this matter. At present the Speaker’s position is clearly defined; he is to initiate the *clôture* without previous conference on certain conditions, and in the future there should be a position of individuality accorded to the Speaker, and there should be nothing in the shape of a conference or partizanship with individual Members of the House. It may be said that that would give rise to frequent Motions for Adjournments, and to obstruction; but I think if the consent is to be given in the House an effectual check would be provided. At any rate, whatever is done

in this matter, there ought to be steps taken which will render the position of the Speaker absolutely unimpeachable from a Party point of view. The effect of my proposition is that the Speaker should have the veto upon the *clôture*. Perhaps it would be desired that some such words as these, “the Speaker not objecting,” should be substituted for the words at present in the Rule. In that case, the position of the Speaker would be clearly defined. The Speaker would exercise a restraint upon the whole proceedings of the House, and that restraint would clearly amount to what we all desire, a protection of minorities. Assuming the principle of veto to be substituted for that of consent, we should have an ample guarantee of the fair conduct of the proceedings of this House. But I would also say, if I may add one more friendly criticism of the proposed Rules, that the House should have an additional guarantee, and that that should consist of the *clôture* being proposed, when it is proposed, by one of the Ministers of the Crown. I think, then, that this proposal should come from one of the Ministers of the Crown; and an additional reason for taking that course is that Ministers of the Crown know the position and course of Public Business and the demands upon the time of the House far better than they can be known by any private Member. If you have these principles in operation, it seems to me that you have a perfect check upon the application of the *clôture*. I venture to say that our acceptance of the closure pure and simple, as proposed by the Treasury Bench, would be much more ready if we had a veto instead of the preliminary arrangement, and if a proposal were made by a responsible Minister of the Crown, who would have before him the fear of public opinion if the closure were improperly exercised. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has stated that he is in favour of the *clôture* pure and simple, and I have heard the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) say, also, that he had no fear of the consequences of the closure; but I venture to say that if we look back to the debates of 1882, and take into account the state of public opinion now, we shall see that the public opinion is not ripe yet for the absolute

application of the closure. If, then, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby and the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale are prepared to accept the closure in the way I have referred to, it is desirable that we should deal with this question on a non-Party footing, and that we should remember that it is a re-modelling not only of the Rules of Debate, but of the Rules of the House. That being so, I think the veto is the nearest approach to the ideas of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and, therefore, that its advantages are open to some consideration. I would add that in addition to the experience of France, where absolute closure has worked serious mischiefs, we have the fact that nearly every other country which has the closure has adopted a system of checks, and the result of the Reports that have reached our hands in the form of Parliamentary Papers is that under those checks the system has been found to work well. In some countries the check is that several Members must demand the closure before it can be applied. In Germany, one Member from each side is allowed to speak on the question; in Italy, one Member is allowed to speak against closure, and there is, indeed, need for the closure in that country, for I see that in some cases Members have spoken for three consecutive evenings; in Spain, also, Members have sometimes spoken throughout the whole Sitting; and I think we have only matched that once in the case of an hon. Member who spoke during the whole of a Wednesday Sitting, with the exception of one hour. In France the same practice prevails; in the Delegations of Austria-Hungary one speech is allowed on each side; in Portugal two speakers are allowed to address the House before the application of the closure, and in Switzerland a two-thirds majority is required before it can be applied. These are the checks which are applied in other countries, and I submit that although we accept the principle of the closure, we ought to surround it with proper restrictions; and I hope, also, that by a regulation which shall be adopted by the Government only a Minister of the Crown shall have the responsible duty of applying it. One word with regard to the appointment of Standing Committees. I must say that my conviction is that devolution in some

form or other is the remedy for a great deal of the congestion which exists in this House; and I think that the clash and the conflict is upon local, as distinguished from national, matters. But while I accept the principle of devolution in the form suggested in the Report of the Committee over which the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale presided, and which has also been suggested in this House, I am bound to say that my opinion carries me further, and urges me to the conclusion that some concession should be made to the principle of localization by having Grand Committees to deal with the affairs of various parts of the United Kingdom. I think if that were carried out we should, in the first place, gain a material relief of the congestion of Business in the House, and I will put it on higher ground and say that Members on this side have shown a desire to deal with Ireland on what I may call a remedial basis, and to give every concession which this House can give to the aspirations of the people consistently with what we feel to be our duty. I say that if Grand Committees are appointed I am not quite sure that in time we shall not only relieve this House of the great incubus of an unwieldy mass of Business, or that we may not approach a *modus vivendi* with the people of the Sister Country. Although we differ now, I think we may in time come to the conclusion that in spite of the interruption of all Business and the clashing of opinion it is best to accept in some measure what this House would concede, and thus restore that happier feeling which we all desire should exist between the two countries. If the plan I have suggested is adopted, I venture to think that the result will be greater despatch of Public Business, greater dignity of our proceedings, and greater happiness and prosperity for the people of this country.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Sir, I believe that on the right solution of this question the future of this House and the country will depend; but I am also labouring under the feeling that I cannot suppress the opinion that the Rules before us will utterly fail in attaining the object in view. I have heard some opinions expressed in the course of this debate with regard to the efficiency of the House for the trans-

action of Public Business. Well, Sir, one of the chief matters connected with the legislation of this country is that the House is accustomed to spend a great deal of its time and energy on the passing of certain Bills through the House, which Bills, having passed a certain stage, are at the end of the Session dropped, and have to be taken up in the next Session as new measures which have not been heard of before. Now it seems to me that if we are to bring about efficiency in the matter of legislation, this is one of the questions with which we must deal. Then, Sir, I believe that this House is unable to deal with the details of all the local questions which come before it consistently with efficiency. We had, for instance, the other night a question before us relating to the crofters. Now it struck me at the time that for 670 Gentlemen to be called on to deal with a question of which very few could have any notion whatever was a very great waste of time. It has been proposed that we should have Committees of the House to deal with the affairs of the sections of the country; and on that I may say that it is my opinion that if we had not to deal with the local affairs of England, Wales, and Scotland we should relieve this House greatly of the waste of time which is largely due to want of local knowledge. I cannot but feel that the speech of the Leader of the House last night did not give us the idea that the Government were very earnest in the matter of carrying through these Rules. I gathered that the right hon. Gentleman thought that we are not going to accomplish much in the direction of relieving the House; and therefore I am driven to the conclusion that the discussion of these Rules will form one of the most destructive agencies in the way of debate. Therefore I hope we shall be able to have before us Rules more calculated to facilitate the transaction of Business than those which we are now discussing. I have listened to some of the remarks made in the course of the debate with a certain degree of pain. This House of Commons, one of the most representative we have ever had, has been spoken of as having degenerated. But we must remember that it is more in tact with the people than before, and we must expect that the grievances of the people will be brought before this

House to a greater extent than has hitherto been the case. For that reason I wish hon. Members to understand that even if they wish to have that dead opposition which has obtained in the past they will not get it, because the Members of the present House are here to bring forward the great evils and wrongs that exist in the country, and it must be expected that those matters will be very freely discussed, nor must we attempt to restrict discussion by imposing Rules which will work neither wisely nor well. I think, Sir, it is to be regretted that hon. Gentlemen should place upon you the responsibility of stopping debate. For my part, I rather prefer that the responsibility should lie with the Government, and that we should have a guarantee that they would not exercise that responsibility without there are very strong grounds for doing so. I think that would be a better plan than that the Chair should be called upon to intervene. I very much sympathize in the principle laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) that the Chair should be approachable by all sections of the House, and that on no occasion should the Chair be called upon to take any steps that would bring it into collision with any portion of the House. Therefore, I think it right that the Chair should not be called upon in connection with the closure, but that the initiative should rest with the Government of the day.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): Sir, it is now 30 years since I was introduced to your Predecessor, and therefore I hope I shall not be regarded as improperly trespassing on the time of the House by the few observations I have to make. The hon. Member for Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) has spoken of the importance of relegating local questions to local Committees. On this point I make this observation—that the House will go astray and make a mistake if we do not bear in mind that every local question does really embody a large question; unless we bear that in mind, we shall have a chaotic condition of things that will lead to great difficulty and detriment by making the conduct of affairs almost impossible. It occurs to me, in the first place, that it is not necessary that we should not have precisely the same Rule of Debate for every question or for every stage of each question.

As our Rules exist now, we have precisely the same form of procedure on Bills introduced by private Members as that which regulated the proposal made by the Government with reference to so large a question as the Government on Ireland. How far it will be possible for us to frame Rules of Debate of such a character that there may be a difference between one measure and another I do not presume to say; but I do lay down the principle that it is not necessary that we should have precisely the same Rules for a Second Reading discussion as we have for considering the details of a Bill in Committee. With regard to the closure, it seems to me that if this is applied we ought to be sure that there are a large number of Members in favour of exercising the Rule. The quorum of this House may be convenient for the conduct of Business, but I think it must be conceded that large measures are sometimes settled by a House whose Members are not numerically proportioned to the importance of the subject. There is a Rule laid down by the House of Congress of America which is so germane to this point of discussion that I will venture to read the words, which are to the effect that a majority of each House shall constitute a quorum, but a smaller number for the purpose of doing Business; but for the closing of debate the attendance of absent Members may be compelled in such a manner and under such penalties as the House may provide. I do not invite the House to adopt the Rule of the American House of Congress or of the Senate; but I think when we are dealing with the question of closure of debate we are entitled to call to our aid the example of those Assemblies which requires a sufficient number of Members to be present, in order that ample authority may be given to the closing of discussion. I think it must be conceded that 200 Members is a sufficient number for the object in view; but I am not equally confident that the proposal that the closure shall be applied, if opposed by less than 40 or supported by 100 Members, does afford sufficient protection. Then, Sir, it seems to me that the Rule which would make it necessary that your consent should be previously obtained is not sufficient or complete. I think there should be some Notice that a request has been made to you, and

that you acquiesce in the closure being applied, because, if that is not done, we may hereafter be liable to great surprises, and through them injury may be done to the Public Service. Then, Sir, with regard to the person who is to approach the Chair, there is a rumour that the Chair shall only be approached by some Member holding a responsible position. If that is to be the law of Parliament, I venture to say that it should not be an unwritten, but a written law—that there should be some definition of the character of the Member who is to approach the Chair. With regard to the subject of devolution, I think there can be no doubt that devolution, in some form or other, has become necessary in this House, and I believe that in all Foreign Assemblies this practice has, in some form or other, been adopted. There will, no doubt, be some difficulty in making a selection of Members to deal with matters of large detail; Members taking a strong interest in the subject would not care to be excluded; but that, I think, is a risk which we must be content to run to secure the object in view. There was power given in the Resolution of 1882 to add certain Members to Committees, so that Members entitled to speak on a subject might have the opportunity of stating their views on matters of importance. Well, Sir, I think that, unless some plan of that kind is adopted, the system of devolution will not act to the satisfaction of the House. We may be assured that, in the present position of public life and existing relations between a Member and his constituents, that a Member who has not been able to make a proposal to a Standing Committee will be heard at some subsequent stage, and therefore no time will be saved by his exclusion from the discussion in Committee. With regard to the closing of debate at a certain time, I think it will be necessary that some departure should be possible from this Rule, because it would be extremely unsatisfactory that a speech by a Minister of the Crown should be cut short by the clock at a particular minute. I am inclined to think that time will not be saved by this plan under all circumstances, for in certain cases the debate would have to be adjourned, and a discussion which might have been concluded in two speeches resumed on the following day.

With regard to the meeting of the House at 2 o'clock, with an interval from 7 o'clock till 9, I think it is desirable that our debates should be uninterrupted, and that we shall gain more by meeting at 3 o'clock, and sitting till half-past 12, than by meeting an hour earlier under the conditions described. With regard to the Rule dealing with the Address, on this, I hope, there will be entire unanimity on both sides of the House. I quite appreciate the reasons which have induced Members to make use of the opportunity offered by the Address to exercise their privileges, which are so curtailed during the subsequent part of the Session; but I hope that if the Rules of Procedure are adopted, the curtailment of debate on the Address will lead to an enlargement of the opportunities of private Members during the Session. I have one more observation to make on a subject about which I entertain a strong opinion. I think that these Resolutions will fail in a large measure if they do not tend to shorten the duration of the Session, the prolongation of which during the last few years is, in my opinion, a great evil. I do not think it is either to the interest of the country, or conducive to the influence of the Parliament, or calculated to advance wholesome legislation, that the selection of Members to serve in the House should be unduly narrowed. It is of great importance in this commercial country that we should have in this Assembly a large number of commercial Members conversant with practical business through the whole course of their lives, and who can give the House the result of actual experience, and not the mere treatises of theorists and schoolmen; and that, I think, cannot be accomplished unless the Session is diminished in length, because, under existing circumstances, there is an increasing reluctance on the part of able men versed in practical affairs to offer themselves as candidates for the representation of constituencies. It is because I think that the Rules before us are likely to bring about this result that my desire is that they may be adopted in the main as the best practicable Rules in the circumstances of the case.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): Sir, I think we are all indebted to the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) for many of the sugges-

tions he has made with regard to the proposed new Rules of Procedure, many of which have my concurrence, and I hope that when we reach the next stage they will receive the earnest attention of hon. Members. I should like to say first a few words in support of the Grand Committees scheme. I had the honour of being a Member of the Grand Committee of 1883 on Trade, and I can safely say that the work on Bills passed by that Committee—the Bankruptcy Bill and the Bill for the Amendment of the Patent Law—was much better done than it could have been in Committee of the Whole House, where attention is less concentrated upon the subject under discussion, and where many influences have a tendency to disturb Members in their work. One of the most remarkable features of that Committee was the entire absence from their discussions of any manifestations of Party spirit, and both Parties seemed inclined to do their utmost to make the Bills in hand the most perfect pieces of practical legislation. I should, therefore, be very sorry indeed to see the Grand Committees scheme discarded; and on the other hand, I shall be willing to support any proposal that will improve their constitution where improvement is necessary. But one of the points to which I desire to draw the attention of the House and of the First Lord of the Treasury, is the fact that we are now altering the whole system of Business in the House for good or for evil, and that probably for many years to come. I appeal to the House to improve upon the work done in recent years, so that we may make this a House in which men can sit who have to work for their living outside the House. The present unreasonable and altogether stupid system that controls the conduct of our Business, makes it almost impossible for men of limited means who have other work to do to discharge effectually their duties to their constituents in addition to their other work. The Government have undertaken on their own responsibility to name a time at which debate shall close. In this way expression has been given to a desire on the part of some which no one has had the courage to put hitherto in the shape of a Motion. But I would suggest, Sir, that, having gone so far as to specify a

time, they should go further. What reason in the world is there that the debate should not close at 11.30 instead of 12.30? There is nothing which causes more disgust to our constituents than the ridiculous and absurd hours at which this House is often in Session transacting serious Public Business. The right hon. Gentleman who opened the debate this evening, with all his great authority, has declared that it is almost impossible for a human being to sustain more than a given number of hours of effective and concentrated labour; and, further, all medical evidence taken in this and other countries has gone to show that a reasonable number of hours' labour is more effective for productive purposes than long-extended periods, during which the body and brain become exhausted, and also that the work done in a less number of hours has always the best result attending it. I apprehend that Members of this House are only human; they are not endowed with any extraordinary powers of endurance as compared with other men; yet I have seen the House of Commons in Session and at work when, for the reasons I have indicated, it was physically incapable of working, and, therefore, morally unfit for the transaction of important public affairs. I hold to the theory that a man who is not physically equal to the labour in which he is engaged is not morally fit to do that work; and I say that this is more seriously true as to the work of this House than it is of any other work undertaken by man. We find that our practice excludes from this Chamber some men of the most valuable experience in the commercial world and other spheres, simply because they are not willing to come here and, so to speak, publicly commit suicide in what is called the interests of their country. On the other hand, if we were to transact our Business and go home at a reasonable hour of the night, we should, in many cases, have a much better choice of Representatives. I will now refer to another proposal in the new Rules—that is with regard to the dinner hour, or evening adjournment. The hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) has very clearly shown that this arrangement would be a great mistake. I believe it would be so indeed. My experience as to the two hours' adjournment is unfavourable to its per-

manent adoption; it may suit some hon. Members; but I am satisfied that the vast majority of them would be rather inconvenienced than otherwise by the permanent alteration of our Rules in this respect. There is another point in connection with it to which I would invite the attention of Members, especially those who have not sat for several Sessions in this House, and who have, therefore, an imperfect knowledge of the way in which we conduct our Business here. I warn them in time not to agree to any such proposal. Last night the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), in his speech, said he hoped the debate would not degenerate into a duel between the two Front Benches, and he invited discussion from all parts of the House. But, Sir, that is precisely what this hour and a-half adjournment would do. We should have the morning sitting consumed by the Member who had moved the adjournment the night before, a Front Bench man on the opposite side, and a Front Bench man in reply on this side. The ordinary rank and file—I do not use the word disrespectfully—would find the greatest difficulty in getting a hearing. I know, Sir, that you, as Speaker, call upon hon. Members from both sides of the House and from all sections impartially. But no Speaker, however strong he might be, and however determined to hear all sections of the House, could possibly control the circumstances. The circumstances would be stronger than the Speaker, and I sincerely trust that hon. Members will see that this would be a fatal blow to the opportunities young Members and independent Members of this House have of taking part in our various debates. Therefore, I trust that the Government will consider these two special points, both of which are especially of interest to my hon. Friends below the Gangway—the Labour Members. I trust these points will receive the favourable consideration of the Government, and that the Government will agree to a modification of their proposals in the direction which I have indicated.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I believe the House will fully recognize the great value of the speeches delivered at the early portion of the discussion this evening, and it is mainly on that account that no hon. Member from this part of the

House has previously risen. I think the constant recurrence of these new Rules for the conduct of the Business of this House sufficiently establishes the contention of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) last evening; that it is not by the system you propose, and by a constant meddling with the Rules of Procedure and the Orders of the House that you can hope ever to perform the great and growing Business which, at the present time, falls to the share of this House, but by a system totally different, which partakes of the nature of devolution, but not the devolution spoken of by hon. Members on the opposite side of the House. With regard to the question of the devolution Committees, I believe it is totally impossible to organize any system of the kind, which will have a more satisfactory effect than the abortive attempt that was made in the year 1883. It has been even suggested that the consideration of the Estimates should be devolved to a Committee. I believe that no more unconstitutional suggestion has ever been made in this House than that the consideration of the Estimates should be taken away from this Chamber and devolved to a small section of Members of this House. The only real check that any minority has over any Government of the day is the right of considering the Estimates in detail, and if we part with that right, then there is an end altogether to the power of minorities in this House, to press forward their claims and their views on general subjects. It must be borne in mind with regard to the great measures of reform that have ever passed into law in this country, that they were originated by the minority, and that it was only by persistent struggles extending—in some cases—over a great number of years, that they were brought about. So jealous has Parliament at all times been with regard to the exercise of its supervision over the Estimates, that the Standing Orders of the House require that the Government should on certain days set up Supply before all other questions, and thereby give hon. Members an opportunity of placing grievance always before Supply. Now, I believe that Rule 7 on the new List proposes that the Government should have power on the days set apart for Government Business, to ar-

range the Business in whatever order they like, and that would give them power to put down Supply in whatever position they choose, and leave hon. Members who have grievances to bring forward in a most unfavourable position. I think hon. Members ought to be careful of guarding the rights they at present possess, and the checks they at present enjoy over the Government, and they should be careful to see that the Government continue at all times to give hon. Members the opportunity of addressing themselves to grievances, which they may feel it their duty to bring forward, before the Government are enabled to proceed with their Business, or before they can get any funds in Supply. With regard to the question of anticipating the subject-matter of Motions put down on the Paper by private Members, I venture to believe that at the present time, in consequence of the elucidation of the Rule, with regard to that matter of anticipation, that if some Standing Order is not proposed by some private Member, and accepted by the Government, there is practically an end to freedom of discussion in this House, because, at the present time, obeying the Rulings of the Chair, any private Member who so chooses can put down on the Paper a Notice of Motion upon a certain subject, for the purpose of preventing other hon. Members, who might feel anxious to bring about a discussion upon that subject, from carrying out their wish. I know that that Rule in former times used to be acted upon. There are innumerable decisions of Speakers which confirm the more recent Rulings that it is impossible to anticipate a Motion set down for consideration. There was an important Ruling upon that matter, for instance, given by Mr. Speaker Brand in the year 1882, and it was given with regard to an effort made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington—then the Member for Woodstock—(Lord Randolph Churchill), and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Chatham (Sir John Gorst), who attempted to raise a discussion with regard to the Egyptian Question—namely, on the subject of the trial of Arabi Pasha. It so happened that there was a Motion down in the name of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), and that

hon. Member rose to Order, and stopped the hon. and learned Member for Chatham in his remarks. It was a singular thing that there were three Notices of Motion on the Paper which covered all the phases of the Egyptian Question, and effectually shut up the noble Lord and the hon. and learned Member. But the hon. and learned Member drew attention to the fact, or, rather, raised the point when called to Order by the hon. Member for Glasgow. He (Sir John Gorst) objected that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Glasgow was not on the Paper; meaning to infer, I suppose, that if a Motion was not on the Paper in express terms, he would have a perfect right to proceed with the subject-matter of his Notice. But it was found that the Notice was down on the Paper in express terms. I think there should be some limitation of the rights of private Members to anticipate discussions in that way, by including in the Rules that, unless a Motion is down in express terms on the Paper, a reference to the subject-matter of a simple Notice should be allowed. A Notice of Motion in express terms should continue for four weeks, while a simple Notice should be limited to a shorter period. At the present time, we see the inconvenient practice resorted to of putting down Notices which it is not intended to proceed with, in order to prevent other hon. Members from dealing with certain subjects. With regard to another matter, I believe the New Rules proceed on totally mistaken lines, and I doubt very much whether they will have greater effect than the Rules of 1882. Nay, I doubt whether they will have as much effect, and I fail altogether to see how they will really improve the chance of more rapid legislation in this House. The present Solicitor General—the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Sir Edward Clarke)—in 1882-3, moved a Resolution to the effect that Bills should be kept alive from one Session to another, unless in the meantime rejected by the House. And if that Motion had been agreed to—subject to certain restrictions—I believe that a greater step would have been taken to facilitate legislation than all the Rules which are now on the Paper put together. I do not know what was the reason for the rejection of that Motion; but I believe the proposal was one of the most reason-

able which could have been made to the House. As to the interval which it is proposed to take in the Sitting, at present time is wasted by reason of the fact that certain Business terminates at 7 o'clock, and, when the House reassembles at 9, different subjects come on for discussion, which hon. Members do not consider of importance, and consequently make no effort to fill the House. Under the proposed Rule, however, the same Business which the House had in hand on the adjournment at half-past 7 would be continued at 9, and it would therefore be easier to find a House at that time. But I should like to ask the Government how they propose to devolve Business to Committees which meet at 12 o'clock, and which can only work two hours before the regular meeting of the House? If the Committees are to continue sitting after the House has met, the result will be that the most important Members will be engaged upon those Committees, while the Business of the House will be left to the least important Members. Thus we should have a Parliamentary scandal which would soon bring an end to the devolution. I believe that large Committees, where consisting of 160 or 80 Members, will not be a success if the hour of meeting is altered from the present hour of 4 o'clock, so as to confine the period during which hon. Members can deliberate in Committee to two hours. As to the first Resolution I think it would be much more convenient if it could be placed last on the Paper instead of first. The moment this Rule is passed it comes into operation, and the Government then is in a position to enforce the passage of the remaining Rules without further discussion if they desire. Of course it is not likely that they will adopt that course, but I would point out that in 1882, when these Rules came before us, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester—now Secretary for Scotland—(Mr. Arthur J. Balfour) moved to postpone the closure Resolution, and to place it last instead of first amongst the proposals. It seems to me that it would be convenient to adopt the right hon. Gentleman's proposal on this occasion. The principal feature in the new Rule of *clôture* is the transference of the initiative from the Chair to the Leader of the House or to some hon. Member

of the House; and it seems to me desirable that it should be the Leader of the House who should take the initiative in a matter of this kind. The change will be satisfactory as far as it goes, because if the Leader of the House unfairly utilizes the power given to him, there is greater freedom left to hon. Members, wherever they sit, to attack him than there is to attack anybody else. We know it is utterly impossible and utterly wrong to cast any reflection upon the Chair, whereas greater freedom is left to hon. Members with regard to the Leader of the House, whoever he may be. That is why I, for one, welcome that portion of the change; but I would respectfully submit to the House that it would be much better to omit all reference to the Speaker on a matter of this kind. It would be infinitely better for the conduct of the Business of this House and for the working of the *clôture*, which now, I fancy, will be put into operation pretty regularly. To put the Speaker in the position of a Referee, so to speak, as to whether or not the *clôture* should be applied, would be in the eyes of the House to make him a partizan. He would have either to give his consent or refuse it. The application would be made by a Member on the Front Bench. If the Speaker refuse it the Government would naturally be offended, and if he gave it, the hon. Members threatened with the use of the *clôture* would be forced to the conclusion that he was unfavourable to them or to their interests. That would be an unfortunate thing, especially when we remember that for some years past there has been no contest for the Office of Speaker, but that Speakers have been chosen unanimously, without a Division. The Speakers nowadays are placed in a position of great impartiality, and I think it would be much better not to throw any duty upon them which would give rise to the suspicion of their being partizans. I therefore trust the House will see its way to exclude from the Rule all appeal to the Speaker, and simply let the initiative rest with the Leader of the House. It is rather singular to reflect that in 1882 the Conservative Party were unanimously opposed to the *clôture*, and are now themselves the persons who propose it. I believe they were perfectly right in their original view, and that the introduction of

this comparatively novel mode of Procedure should be viewed with great suspicion; and it seems very strange that the Conservatives should come down now and propose a Rule much stronger than that originally proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). It must be remembered that one of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite, the Member for Brighton (Mr. Marriott), succeeded in getting his place there mainly through his opposition to the gagging Resolution of 1882. That right hon. Gentleman made use of language at that time which I am certain he must now lament. He compared the *Clôture* Resolution to a jemmy, and said he would not mind entrusting an innocent girl with a jemmy, but in the hands of a burglar it would be a different thing; and that as he knew that the person who principally wanted the jemmy was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—then President of the Board of Trade—(Mr. J. Chamberlain), he was very reluctant to put it in his hands. I believe we are face to face, or very soon will be, with an iron hand that is going to be held over a portion of Her Majesty's Dominions; and I would remind the House that in 1882 the right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) expressed his fear lest the closure might be unfairly applied to the Nationalist Members from Ireland, and a safety valve be thereby closed, to the great danger of the Government of that country. Then, again, the present Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury), speaking on the question of the *clôture*, expressed the hope that it would retain its French name, because, as he said, it breathed a French spirit, and because it would inevitably bring about reprisals upon those who put it in force. The Government must remember that as sure as they use the *clôture* at the present time—as sure as night follows day—the power will be used against them when they are in Opposition. I will close my citation of authorities on Parliamentary Procedure by quoting the late Sir Thomas Erskine May, who stated that the Forms of the House constituted a protection to minorities against the tyranny of majorities, and that it would be most unfortunate if the power of

putting an end to debate should be used for the purpose of stifling free discussion. With regard to the number of Members who should be in the House when the clôtüre is enforced, the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) referred to his American experience, and spoke of the Members of the House of Representatives being "summoned" two hours before the clôtüre was put in force, or before the "Previous Question" was moved, which is the form clôtüre takes in that country. He spoke of summoning or calling the hon. Members of this House, but I would point out that the position of hon. Members of this House is widely different to that of American Representatives. Members of the American Congress receive large sums in compensation for their Parliamentary services; and if you adopt a system by which hon. Gentlemen will be compelled to come down here at 12 o'clock in the day and stop until 12 o'clock at night, thereby being unable to follow their ordinary avocations, you will have to consider the question of compensating them for attendance. It would not be then as it has been in the past, that hon. Members could come down when they liked, but it would be a question of compelling them to be in the House; and you would have to adopt the system practised by almost every other Legislature in the world of paying Members for their loss of time.

MR. J. C. STEVENSON (South Shields): With regard to the opinion which seems to prevail, that it will be the Party in power who, as a rule, will be anxious to put in force the closure, I would point out that the tedious repetitions and the kind of speeches that are sometimes made on both sides of the House are very often as much an annoyance to the minority as to the majority. Hon. Members have means of escape from tiresome discussions; but you, Sir, being compelled to sit in the Chair continuously, are consequently better able to form an opinion as to tedious repetition than either majorities or minorities, and as to when a subject has been adequately discussed. No doubt the Chair is entitled to stop tedious repetition in a single speech; but I do not know that it has power to put a stop to tedious repetition of a more serious character; that is to say, when one hon. Member

after another, in the course of a long discussion, produces precisely the same arguments. I desire to speak on this occasion on behalf of a body of Members who have not hitherto been mentioned in the debate—namely, private Members, who do not, and probably never will, have an opportunity of sitting on either of the Front Benches. I myself am an unfortunate victim in this respect, because I am in charge of a Bill which has excited great interest in the country generally—namely, the Sunday Closing Bill, and have been in charge of it for 10 years; but on only two occasions, owing to the manner in which Business is transacted in this House, have I been able to get a Vote upon it, and that in an indirect manner. Although, nominally, three days a week are devoted to private Members, it is almost impossible for a Member to carry a Bill through, however much it may be desired by the country, and however much the majority may be ready to pass it if they had the opportunity. I am glad, therefore, to find that the same Rules of Closure applying to Government measures will prevail on Wednesdays, and affect the legislation of private Members. That will be a great advantage. Three years ago, I succeeded in calling attention to a Rule of the kind which, unfortunately, was not adopted. I proposed that on Wednesdays, if a Bill had been under discussion for four hours, by the arrival of the clock at a certain hour—I think a quarter past 5—the vote of the House was to be taken upon the measure, and the stage was to be decided. According to that proposal, there was to be no appeal to the Speaker, the clock itself bringing the closure. I am not going to argue in support of that proposal. I merely mention it to the House whilst expressing my gratification at the proposal of the Government to change the existing Rule, rendering it impossible for a single individual to defeat the wishes of the Whole House and prevent a Division being taken. I thank the Government also for having adopted the suggestion I put on the Paper one or two Sessions ago, with regard to private Members' Bills which have passed certain stages. According to this arrangement, those Bills which have made some progress, and have passed the second reading, will not be blocked by others which have no

chance of passing. I think by this means—and other measures which are to be adopted—the scandal will be removed of private Members being unable to get any legislation through the House.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I rise, Sir, with much hesitation to take part in the debate, because it may happen, holding the Office which the House has done me the honour to confer upon me, that I shall have to take some share in the administration of the proposed new Rules, and it may be inconvenient in the circumstances for me to criticize beforehand the Procedure I may have to administer. On the other hand, however, the very distinction that the House has conferred upon me places me in a position in which I may be free from any Party bias, and can only have in view the best mode of facilitating the despatch of the Business which the House has undertaken. In the first place, I desire to look at these proposed Rules from the point of view of a political mechanic. The House of Commons is a great political machine, and it is charged with the performance of certain duties which everyone will be ready to admit have been allowed to fall into considerable arrear. The question, therefore, is, in what manner can this machine be best mended or altered, so as to enable it to fulfil the purpose for which it was created? An hon. Member said last night that the House of Commons is not a mere machine for grinding out Acts of Parliament. I am far from thinking that that is the sole function of the House of Commons. The House has to see that law and justice are fairly administered throughout the land; it has to see that the duties of the public services are discharged in an expeditious, easy, certain, and equitable manner; and its next and certainly not inferior function is to express in law what is the will of the electors. The Members of this House, in addition to their other duties, are sent here to introduce amendments of the law. At all elections questions are submitted to the electors with regard to proposed amendments of the law. Nevertheless, it cannot be alleged with accuracy that the amendment of the law is their sole duty. It is, admitted, however, that on the question of the reform of the law the House has fallen into arrear, and has

failed altogether to respond in any degree of celerity to what the people of the country desire. The question, therefore, is, why is it that the House has failed to carry out the wishes of the nation? The answer suggested by the proposed Rules to that question is, in the first place, because the House has undertaken too much work, and, secondly, because there is on the part of some hon. Members a disposition to interfere—by unnecessary and prolonged debate—with the discharge of the functions of the House. The remedy for these evils is the amendment of the legislative machinery; but that amendment must undoubtedly be accompanied by due safeguards for securing due and proper debate of the subjects brought before the House. As for the question of the quantity of work which the House is fitted to perform, it is my opinion that, as was recommended by the Committee of last year, there must be a devolution of a portion of that work, by means of the House being divided into four or five Committees, to which all Bills and a certain portion of the Estimates shall be referred before they come before the House as a whole to be finally disposed of. The Government have not seen their way to recommend those proposals of the Committee for adoption; and I own that the Government are entirely justified in not bringing those proposals before the House just now, because that Committee—although recommending the division of the House into four or five Committees—went on to declare that an essential complement of their proposal was that private legislation by this House should be put an end to. I fully admit that there are considerable difficulties in the way of carrying out the proposal to divide the House into several Committees; but nevertheless, I think that they are not insurmountable. Well, Sir, the next question which, to my mind, is intimately connected with devolution is that of fixing the hour of closing in the evening. It is a very alluring suggestion that hon. Members should be able to get away by half-past 12 o'clock; but I feel much apprehension that, unless there is some great multiplication of the powers of the House, it will not be able to get through its work within the limits of the time of an ordinary Session. Of course, that can only be decided by experience; but I feel

grave apprehension that to get through our work we shall have to abandon a fixed time for closing, not constantly perhaps, but very frequently. Even with the assistance of the closure, I do not see how, as an arithmetical problem, we could get the work into the time. Therefore, it would be well to adopt the proposal of the hon. Member for Partick that at the commencement of the Business at any sitting a Motion for the suspension of the Rule as to closing at a fixed hour may be made and decided, without Amendment or debate. With respect to the closure, this is rendered necessary by the abuse of the power of debate in the House. It is not seriously disputed that there must be closure; but it is felt that it ought to be fenced round, in some way or other, so as to secure due debate. Under the existing Rules, due debate is secured by the Chair having to declare that it has been secured, and that it is the "evident sense of the House" that the debate should close. I frankly confess that when the Rule was adopted in 1882, as a subordinate Member of the Government, I dissented from its introduction into the House. The essential thing to consider with regard to the closure is in what degree it is wished to have the power of closure made available. Is it to be available at short notice, or not? I believe that if you wish the closure really to do its work, although you may not desire that it should be often used, it ought to be available at short notice. If there appears in any quarter of the House a disposition to prolong debate, there should also be a consciousness in that quarter of the House that the disposition can be checked almost as soon as it arises. If, therefore, the closure is to be real, and if the machine is to be made efficient, we must have closure of a character that can often be put into operation. It is impossible for the Speaker to put the closure often into operation, and that is one of the great reasons why the Chair should not be a party to it. If the occupant of the Chair is not to be the person to declare that due debate has been sufficiently secured, where are we to find a security? The proposal of the Government finds it in another quarter—by allowing any Member to appeal to the Chair as to whether due debate has been sufficiently secured or not. Any Member may, under the

proposed Rule, ask the Speaker for liberty to move "That the Question be now put." I am a little in the dark as to how this will work, and I think the Government should state how they intend it to work, and how they think it will work. Is the Member to whom is to be entrusted this function to rise from his seat in the House and ask the Speaker to put the Question, or to confer with the Chair beforehand? It is not very agreeable to the House to entertain the notion that a Member is to confer with the Speaker beforehand as to what is to be done; and, further, I may say that any suspicion of this kind does not add to the lustre of the Chair. The thing must be done openly; and, according to the Rule, any Member may get up and ask the Chair to put the Question. The possibility of the Chair declining to put the Question must also be considered, and if that happens, it will not leave a good impression; but, on the other hand, if the occupant of the Chair is really to exercise the check he is intended to do, he must now and then decline to put the Question on the application of some adventurous Member. It has been said that the power is only to be exercised by a Member of the Government or the Leader of the House; but there is nothing to that effect in the Rule. A great deal can be said against leaving it entirely to the Government to appeal to the Speaker. It may, for instance, be a private Member's Bill which is under discussion, and I think that, in such a case, the hon. Member in charge of the Bill or Motion before the House should be the person to appeal to the Chair. It is absolutely essential in the interest of Order that the power of application should be limited to some person who holds a responsible position in respect of the Business under discussion; and, if the Rule is to be passed, some such limitation should be put upon it. But I think it will be better to do away with the necessity for the Speaker having anything to do with it, and to secure some other sufficient safeguard for debate being adequately prolonged. The Committee on Procedure unanimously set aside a proposal to adopt numbers as a limitation on the power of closure, because it was felt to be both imperfect and unsatisfactory. In view of that fact, it is very strange that the Government should

have brought forward their present proposal to introduce the principle of numbers as a safeguard. This departure from the recommendation of the Committee appears to me to be inexcusable. That the present proposal will be practically inoperative will be seen when it is considered that 180 Members on one side of the House will not put a stop to a debate against the wishes of 50 Members on the other side; and also when it is remembered that in none of the Divisions in Committee of Supply last Session were there 200 Members in the majority, while there were always more than 40 in the minority. For these reasons, I put aside the question of numbers; I put aside also the intervention of the Chair on account of the evils which attach to that method; I put aside closure by a bare majority; and, therefore, I am driven to the conclusion that the only workable and trustworthy method is to be found in the principle of a proportionate majority. It may be said that this is a novel proposal; but, in principle, it is not so; and it may be said also that as a simple majority is sufficient to pass an Act, it ought to be sufficient to apply the closure. It is true that Members are sent to this House by their constituencies to vote on alterations of the law, which must be adopted by a simple majority of the House; but, Sir, they are also sent here to speak and act in the interests of their constituents; and if the closure be adopted, they may be prevented from fulfilling the purposes for which they are sent. The action of the House in restricting the privileges of a certain section of its Members is similar to that of a jury; and, by considering the action of a jury, some light will be thrown upon this subject. In England, absolute unanimity is required of a jury for a verdict; and in Scotland the modification of this rule in civil cases still requires a proportional majority. If, therefore, we treat the action of the Members of this House as the act of jurymen pronouncing a verdict, we shall not be departing from, but following the ancient principle of the Constitution, by saying that there shall be a considerable majority in favour of the application of the closure. The proportion proposed upstairs was two to one; but the proportion I propose is half as much again. It is necessary, perhaps, to explain how I came to the conclusion that the prin-

ciple of a proportionate majority ought to be adopted in deciding whether a discussion was sufficiently prolonged or not. This matter is sometimes represented as being a contest between the supporters of the Government and the other Members of the House; I think, however, if hon. Members will turn the subject over in their minds, they will see that this view shows a very insufficient appreciation of the facts. In point of fact, it is rather a contest between all who desire legislation, and those who do not desire legislation. I have already referred to the class of questions known as the Liquor Questions. I have no Sabbatarian desire to shut up the public-houses on Sundays, nor am I greatly enamoured of the restrictions which it is proposed to place on the sale of intoxicating liquors; but I cannot help thinking that, if we are convinced that the majority of Members of this House are sent here to carry out the will of the electors, who are behind them, and to get these things done, we ought not to put any obstacles in the way of their being done. Therefore, I hold that this reform of Procedure is not an official, but a democratic question. Some hon. Members may, perhaps, think that the clogs and hindrances put in the way of legislation are useful, not in the way of security for the due consideration of what may be proposed, but in the way of preventing that which they dislike being carried out. I say that those Gentlemen are actuated by the same feelings as hon. Members below the Gangway, and inspired by the same desire to use the Forms of the House to prevent the legislation which they themselves dislike. It is of no use to give the franchise broadly, unless we are prepared to carry the consequences of the extended franchise into the House itself. I do not wish, indeed to see the House made too quickly responsive to movements out of doors. We have too much of that already. We know that a foolish sentimental newspaper, or a foolish sentimental clergyman, may get up a cry — a bitter or a nasty cry — and Leaders on both sides of the House sometimes seem to vie with each other to give the most ready assent of the Legislature to the shrieks out-of-doors. But when Questions have been duly considered, and have made their way in the country, when Resolutions have been maturely adopted, introduced

into this House, and brought forward Session after Session, hon. Members will not act fairly to those who possess the franchise if they retain the present machinery of the House in order to prevent those Resolutions being legislated upon. On the other hand, if we show the frank spirit in respect of these matters, which, I hope, will be manifested, we shall then have the best answer which can be made to any complaint of Members below the Gangway, for we shall then be showing a readiness to submit to what is the prime principle of Parliamentary government—namely, that when the minority has been heard, and after due and prolonged discussion, the will of the majority must and shall prevail.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Sir, in spite of the ability of the many speeches which have been delivered this evening, and not least of the speech which we have just heard, I confess that, to a listener who compares it to the debate on the subject in 1882, this debate might appear a trifle dull. On that occasion we had great Party debates and great Party Divisions. We had great expectations on the one side, and great fears on the other. Hon. Members opposite seemed to anticipate that, with the adoption of the closure, a kind of Radical millennium would begin, and that obstruction would at once cease. On the other hand, there were not a few Conservatives who thought, in those days, that the passing of the Resolution we are now attempting to amend would be the death-knell of the Conservative Party. We have both learnt wisdom. It is all very well for hon. Members opposite to twit us with a change of opinion; they have changed their opinions too. ["No, no!"] There has been a general change of opinion, not only in this House, but in the country as well, upon this subject. There has been a general consensus of opinion among us to deal with this matter in no Party spirit, not timidly, and with the intention of bringing about that result of our discussion to which the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney) so properly referred, and yet without any repression of free speech in this House. The debate on the last two nights has turned entirely upon two points, and upon two points alone, to

which I will allude very briefly, as they have been so fully discussed that I could not add very much that is new to this discussion. The hon. Member for Bodmin said a good deal upon the question of the Amendment we propose to the Closure Rule. I think it will be universally admitted that the Closure Rule has not been sufficiently applicable to the proceedings of this House. There have been times since its passing when it might have been applied with general approbation, and to the great advantage of the order and usefulness of this House. Why was it not applied? I believe that the reason is simply this—that the initiative has been in the hands of the Speaker alone, instead of what we propose—namely, that it shall be in the hands of any Member of this House. That is the change which we propose to make in this Resolution. Now, objection has been taken to it on the ground of the responsibility we intend to impose upon the occupant of the Chair. It has been already amply shown that whatever that responsibility may be, it must be less than the present responsibility which rests upon him. We have proposed that the consent of the Chair shall be necessary for the application of the closure. What does that mean? It means simply that the Chair shall be able to interfere for the prevention of abuse by the Motion for closure being made in order merely to interrupt the proceedings of the House, for the prevention of surprise, and for the protection of minorities. These three heads, I venture to say, comprise all the circumstances under which the interference of the Chair can be required by our proposal. Let me take the first head—the prevention of abuse of the Motion for closure. That question has been alluded to by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). The hon. Member for Bodmin argued that his proposal for a proportionate majority, if carried out, would serve the purpose; but it would not prevent hon. Members from interrupting the proceedings of the House. [Mr. COURTNEY: I proposed to limit the class who could put the Motion.] It is true that the hon. Member limited the class to Ministers of the Crown, or any Member responsible for any particular Business before the House. But that very proposal was made by one of the Mem-

bers for Lancashire before the Select Committee. It was amply discussed, and it was negatived; if not without a Division, at any rate by an enormous majority. The Committee felt as the Government feel, that it would be better to place all Members of the House upon an equality in this matter, and to give each Member the same privileges as possessed by a Minister of the Crown. I do not believe that when the hon. Member for Bodmin comes to propose his suggestion, if he does propose it—that the closure shall only be applicable on the Motion of certain Members—he will be more successful than was the hon. Member who proposed it in the Committee. Then comes the question of surprise. The hon. Member for Bodmin said that, in his opinion, it was essential that the closure should be applicable at any moment. That is not my view. I believe myself that it would be most unfortunate if the closure could be exercised in the way in which the hon. Member suggests. I agree with what fell last night from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), that almost the principal thing to be guarded against in this matter was the application of the closure by surprise. That, Sir, is amply guarded against by the proposals of Her Majesty's Government. It is in no degree guarded against by that of the hon. Member for Bodmin, because his closure by a proportionate majority may be put in the House at any time. There is another matter to which the hon. Member for Bodmin referred—namely, to difficulties which are inherent in the principles of the existing Rule, and are also included in the Resolution of Her Majesty's Government as to the closure towards the end of the Session. I cannot conceive any greater abuse than would be incurred by the frequent application of the closure in the month of August, when the Government would have a certain majority in this House, and might force through the House, without ample discussion, measures which, if not of first-rate, were, at all events, of considerable importance. These are the three points in which the Resolution is superior, from our point of view, to the proportionate majority recommended by the hon. Member for Bodmin. The hon. Member says that the Committee adopted the proposal of a proportionate majority,

and negatived that contained in the Resolution. No doubt they did. I was responsible for proposing the precise figures mentioned in the Resolution, which was negatived; and wishing to impose some limitation on the exercise of the closure, I joined the hon. Members who were in favour of a proportionate majority. But I do not believe that the proportionate majority will have anything like the same chance of success in this House as the figures in the existing Rule, which has this merit—from the point of view of those who wished the closure to be applicable by the majority—that when the numbers on either side are about 200, the closure can be applied by a very small majority. In 1882 I said that I did not believe that it would be possible in fair Party fighting for a Government to put down an Opposition by the imposition of the closure; that the Government would know too well what use would be made in the country of such action on their part by the Opposition, and that the result would be certain vengeance upon the Government for the abuse of their powers. That is my opinion still. Well, Sir, I adhere to every word of that still. I believe that it is important that the right of free speech should be secured to minorities, and that is why we have adopted a proposal which requires the consent of the Chair before the closure can be imposed; and also that a certain proportion of votes must be given in favour of its application. Reference has been made by more than one Member to the subject of devolution. I do not think it necessary to go at length into the subject, because it has been admitted by several speakers that the Government were justified in not attempting to propose the Resolutions which were only half adopted by the Select Committee last year. I quite agree with the hon. Member for Bodmin that this question cannot be settled definitely without the adoption of some system of devolution providing that much of the Business now done in this House shall be performed either by large Committees of the House or by Local Bodies outside. There are, however, two important points to be borne in mind at present. We must not overstrain the powers of the Members, for if we do the result will be that the Business of the country will be badly done.

[Second Night.]

This is why I believe it will be impossible to establish a satisfactory system of devolution until the House has been relieved of its Private Business. The second point to bear in mind is that Members cannot be in two places at once. If they are engaged on a Grand Committee, or a Select Committee, they cannot be taking part in the debates of this House. But it would be perfectly possible, under the Rules now proposed, for the Grand Committees to sit in the morning, and for the Members constituting them to attend afterwards the sittings of this House. The cessation of the work of the House at 12.30 a.m. ought to enable hon. Members to begin Committee work rather earlier than at present. It might be possible, without hardship, for Committees to begin their work at 11 o'clock. They would then have as much time for work as the Grand Committees had two years ago. I do not say that this is a complete settlement of the question; but it is one which can be adopted with advantage until Members can be relieved of the private Business of this House, and until a more comprehensive scheme can be devised for devolving upon a larger number of Committees work which can be properly removed from the House itself. We propose these Rules without any wish to force them upon the House, without any wish to use the majority which a Government possesses in order to compel their adoption. We have placed them before the House for full discussion upon their merits, with a sincere desire to consider any proposals that hon. Members in any quarter of the House may make for their amendment. If the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) likes to place upon the Paper some proposal for the better devolution of Business; if we can adopt it consistently with the principles to which I have referred, we shall be delighted to consider it with a view to its embodiment in the Rules. That is the spirit in which we approach this matter, and in which it has been approached universally by the House. We all agree upon the principle; we all agree that it is desirable to make this House more efficient in the conduct of its Business. But although we agree upon the principle, we do not by any means agree upon the details of its application. Is not that a reason for

thinking that now we may have discussed the principle sufficiently, and that we had better turn to the discussion of the separate Rules? I would venture to hope that, having had a discussion for two nights now upon the general question of the Resolutions which we have proposed—an opportunity having been afforded to hon. Members to express very fully their views upon the points in which they differ from our proposals as well as the points on which they agree with them—the House may now be allowed to proceed with the discussion, line by line, of the first Rule, in order to see what shall be the practical result of the suggestions made to Her Majesty's Government and the House of Commons. I am sure that there has been nothing whatever in the course of this debate which has shown any desire to obstruct the progress of these Rules; I believe the House is anxious to get to their discussion; and, therefore, I would express the hope that the general debate may now be concluded, and the consideration of the Rules *seriatim* entered upon.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down commenced his remarks by saying he believed all sections of this House have now come to the opinion that it is time that these New Rules should be adopted for the conduct of the Business of this House. Well, on behalf of the section of the Members of this House with whom I have the honour to act, I must say we have not yet come to the conclusion that the adoption of these, or any other, Rules is necessary, if the Government will only show a disposition to treat the claims of the country we represent with something like common justice and fair play. I have listened to a great number of speeches that have been made since this debate commenced, and I have been struck by the singular unanimity with which all Members have avoided any reference whatever to the causes which led to the introduction of these Rules in the year 1882; and also all reference to what is to be the immediate use to which the Government intend to put the Rules when they get them passed. It is a matter of ancient history now that these Rules were first adopted in 1882, by the Members of Her Majesty's present Opposition, for the purpose of preventing Irish Mem-

bers from forcing on the attention of the House and the British people that claim for Irish Home Government which has now become a cardinal point of Liberal policy. I can very well understand, therefore, why the Members of Her Majesty's Opposition did not care to make any reference to the cause of the introduction of these Rules. What is now high statesmanship on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) was then rank obstruction on the part of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). I do not, however, quite so easily understand why it was that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), in introducing the Rules to our notice yesterday, did not make the slightest reference whatsoever to the fact that there was such a Party in this House as the Irish Party, or such a question before the House as the Question of the crisis which is now occurring in Ireland, and which should be dealt with somehow or another by this Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman never made the slightest reference to our existence here; but, though the right hon. Gentleman is the Leader of this House, he, himself, has got a Leader in the Cabinet, and if we did not hear from the Leader of the House when introducing the Rules, the purpose to which they are immediately intended to be put, we know by the reports in this morning's newspapers that, at a meeting held elsewhere, the noble Marquess at the head of the Government gave a very explicit statement to his Followers as to what use these Procedure Rules should be put to immediately the Government got possession of them. He said that a great many people would blame the Government for not having suppressed the National League in Ireland, and would say that that might have been done long before now. The noble Marquess did not say that the Government were reluctant to suppress the National League, but that they had not suppressed it because they were not in possession of the necessary legal machinery to enable them to do it. He supplemented that by stating that he expected that, immediately the Procedure Rules were passed, the coercive legislation foreshadowed by the Government would be taken in hand, that it would be pushed through with all

celerity; and that directly the Government got the Procedure Rules, he and his Colleagues would not be so slow in adopting measures dealing with the National League and kindred institutions in Ireland in the future as they had been in the past. That was a very fair and straightforward declaration of policy on the part of the noble Marquess; and I think if his Colleague, the Leader of this House, had been as straightforward in his declaration in introducing these Resolutions to the House, perhaps we should not have seen this discussion so much confined to the minute details of the Procedure Rules. You would have had the wider question of the use the Resolutions are to be put to discussed; rather than the technical details, which, in my opinion, would have been much better discussed when the separate Rules came under consideration. I, as an Irish Member, decline to discuss these Procedure Resolutions on technical grounds. We came to the conclusion last night that this first debate would have a general scope, and I understand that general scope to refer as much to the necessity for the introduction of these Rules at all, as to the details of them. Other Members who have preceded me—in fact, the majority of hon. Members who have spoken—have satisfied themselves with the discussion of the details of the Rules. As a Representative of an Irish constituency, I prefer to discuss this question from the point of view of whether there is any necessity whatever for the introduction of these Rules into Parliament at the present moment. I will call attention to the fact that though these Rules were under the discussion of a Committee for some time last year and the year before, it was not necessary to introduce them in the last two Sessions of Parliament. It was in the year 1885 that for the first time, owing to the passing of the Representation of the People Act, Ireland was enabled to return 85 Members fairly representing the country. I am free to admit that when we, who were then elected, came over to this House for the first time, we did not enter within the portals of this House animated with the most friendly feelings either towards this House itself or towards what are called its traditions. I would go further and say that we came over here rather with very hostile feelings towards the

House and its Rules and traditions, which in our opinion had been always, hitherto marked towards the disadvantage rather than to the benefit of the people we claim to represent. But though those were our feelings when we entered into this House, I would remind the House that we were not very many weeks here when we learnt that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) entertained the idea of introducing legislation for the purpose of remedying the grievances we suffered under in Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not discussing the Question before the House in any sense. He is not speaking to the Resolutions either in their individual or collective capacity.

MR. LANE: I was trying to show, with great deference to your ruling, Sir, why it is I hold that if the Government had introduced at the beginning of this Session a policy or anything like fair justice to Ireland there would be no necessity for introducing these Rules or Procedure for the purpose of gagging the Irish Representatives; because, Sir, if you have followed the remarks I have made up to the present—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I have told the hon. Gentleman that he is not speaking relevantly, and if I have to interrupt him again I shall be obliged to take stronger measures.

MR. LANE: I rose, Sir, simply to state to this House that I did not think that there was any necessity whatever for the introduction of these Rules of Procedure; and I desire to show if I may be allowed to do so by the ruling of the Chair, that if the Irish Members see that they are about to receive anything like fair play from the present Government, there will be no Members more likely to study the economy of time, or to conform to the Rules of the House, than the hon. Members who have accompanied me here to represent 86 constituencies in Ireland. That was what I was trying to show at the time you, Sir, called my attention to the fact that I was wandering from the subject before the House. If I so wandered I can assure you it was quite unintentional and without the slightest desire to depart from the subject under discussion at the present moment. When the Irish Representatives saw last year that they were about to receive a measure of justice they practically

effaced themselves for the time being. During the whole of the discussions of last year except where it was absolutely necessary for them to do so, there was no such thing as obtrusive intervention in the debates on the part of the Irish Members. Well, we fully recognize that we could not expect Her Majesty's Government, elected as they were at the General Election of last year, to come down to this House now prepared with a policy similar to that which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) introduced—

MR. SPEAKER: I must direct the hon. Gentleman to discontinue his speech in consequence of continued irrelevancy.

The hon. MEMBER accordingly resumed his seat.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): It is not unnatural that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) should desire that we should, as soon as possible, get into the discussion of the several Resolutions themselves; and, therefore, so far as I am concerned, I shall do my best to make my remarks as brief as possible. But I am anxious to take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Government to omissions in the Code of Procedure which they have introduced. One of these omissions is that absence of a complete scheme of devolution which has been already adverted to; and another, which has been referred to by no hon. Member who has yet spoken except the hon. Member for South Shields (Mr. J. C. Stevenson), is the absence of any provision for better using that part of the time of the House which is devoted to private Members' Bills. Owing to the abnormal condition of things which has prevailed of late years, the Government having in several Sessions taken most of the time of private Members, hon. Members may have forgotten—new Members especially may have forgotten—that private Members ought to have three days of the week for the transaction of their Business—namely, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and part of Fridays. Now, it is notorious that the time given to private Members in the last Parliament or two has been of little use for the purpose of legislation. The number of private Members who balloted for opportunities to carry forward Bills at the beginning

of the present Session was nearer 200 than 100—it certainly exceeds 150. And, of course, the more numerous the Private Members' Bills are the less chance is there for any particular Bill getting such a place in the Ballot as will afford the opportunity of fair discussion. The House has had to choose between a system of choice and one of chance, and in regard to private Members' Bills it has adopted the latter system. Government Business is ordered on the principle of choice, that is to say, Ministers are permitted to arrange their business as they think best; but private Members have to trust to the chance of the Ballot, whether the questions they wish to bring forward for discussion are important or not. Of the Wednesdays many are taken up by the Government, and the chances of private Members' are thus further reduced. Some few Bills, no doubt, coming out early on the Ballot, obtain discussion, perhaps, even second reading, but they are not necessarily the Bills which the House cares most to discuss. It is the fashion to speak lightly of private Members' Bills, and to say that all the important legislation of the country should come from the Government. In my opinion, however, private Members' Bills represent a very important embodiment of public opinion. They are the means by which subjects that are much in the minds of our constituents can be brought forward and tested by discussion. It is all very well to say that the Press and the platform furnish sufficient machinery for this purpose, but a single day's discussion of a Bill brought before the House of Commons in a practical shape is worth many newspaper articles and hundreds of platform speeches. If the House were in this way to secure a discussion of matters which are really important, and not merely of the subject which the Ballot brings up, it would render very considerable service to the public. There are, no doubt, large and important questions—questions of great complexity—which must be left to the Government of the day; but over and above this there are a great many questions out of which no great political capital can be made, and which, therefore, it is not worth the while of the Government to take them up, but which it is worth the while of the House to take up on the proposition of a private

Member. If we look over the legislation of the last 40 years up to the time when the practice of blocking became general, we shall see that during many years a great deal of the most useful work of the House has been done by private Members' Bills. A great many small amendments of the law and small administrative questions affecting the social welfare of the people have been carried by private Members' Bills. I should like to see the time of the House devoted to private Members' Bills given usefully, and not wasted upon fads or trivial questions that are very often mere crotchets. It should be given to those questions in which Members and their constituents feel a real interest. There is, for instance, the question which the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Shields has so properly referred to—namely, the Liquor Traffic Question, which has been hanging round the neck of this House, so to speak, for many years. That should be dealt with, and also the question of the amendment of the Commons and Enclosure Acts, which has been before Parliament for the past seven years, and which very nearly touches the interests of the poor, but which we have not had, during these seven Sessions, an opportunity of discussing, for the reason that it has always come out so low in the Ballot. Several plans have been suggested to meet the difficulty of making a judicious selection among private Members' Bills. It has been thought that the object in view might be attained by giving a preference to those Bills in which a considerable number of Members are interested, as, for instance, by allowing Members to subscribe their names to Bills, and thus to show their preference for particular measures, so as to enable them to obtain a better position on the Order Book. It has also been proposed that some Bills should be taken as what are termed short Bills—that is, with a strict limitation on the length of the speeches to be made for and against them; and I trust the Government will be able, in the course of the debate on the new Rules, to give attention to this matter. I draw their attention to the subject in order to urge upon them the desirability of selecting from the plans suggested that which has the greatest promise of usefulness. The matter is well deserving of consideration, and will

become more important as the principle of devolution is extended. With regard to the Rule of Closure, I approve of the initiative in putting it in force being taken out of the hands of the Speaker and given to a Minister of the Crown, or a Member in charge of a Bill. I cannot approve, however, of what seems to be the desire of the Government, to take a greater advantage of the judicial functions of the Speaker. I regard so highly the traditional impartiality of Mr. Speaker, that I do not wish the House to do anything to imperil it in the slightest degree. I believe the Government is now entering upon a course which will imperil that judicial character which the Speaker's Office has hitherto maintained, but of which the imposition of these new liabilities may deprive it. No doubt what they propose will make the Rule easier of application, and, so far, the change will be for the better; but, at the same time, the requirement of consent on the part of the Chair will, when that consent is given, associate the Chair with the action of the Party seeking the closure; will create an impression of complicity between the Chair and one Party, and will inevitably bring the Speaker into the political arena. It seems to me that the true check upon the misuse of the closure is not to be found in any of the safeguards proposed by the Government, but in the action of public opinion. Both many leading Members and the officials in the House of Representatives in Washington, where the closure is constantly used, and where it is regarded as practically indispensable to the conduct of business, have informed me that, substantially, it is not abused; that it certainly does not operate to facilitate tyranny over minorities; but they add that the great safeguard against its abuse is found in the expression of public opinion. I do not cite the case of the House of Representatives as one from which we can learn much, for its circumstances, its work, its composition, are very different from those of this House. I refer to it only for the purpose of remarking that there, where closure is of constant application, the only and sufficient check on abuse is found in the fear of public displeasure. So in this country, also, the sense of fair play on the part of the public will be an ample, and the

only adequate, safeguard against the tyrannical use of the closing power by majorities to silence minorities.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some surprise to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce). I was at Washington a few weeks ago, and I endeavoured to ascertain what is the opinion of the independent Members of Congress in regard to the working of the closure there. The complaint made daily in America by the Press is that the closure is abused in the Congress at Washington. When a debate takes place in Congress, the Whips of the Parties arrange with the Speaker, behind the backs of Members, who are to be the speakers, and under that system the independent Members have no chance whatever of expressing their views. There is this sort of safety valve to the abuse of the closure at Washington—namely, that if an independent Member rises to speak, by a technical Motion in the House the speech is laid on the Table. The speech has not been listened to, or the arguments contained in it controverted; but it is printed, and a large number of copies of it are supplied by Congress for distribution amongst the Members' constituents. That is the result of an abuse of the closure in the Washington Congress. As to the people of America taking a large interest in what takes place in the Congress, the fact is that the reports of the proceedings in the newspapers occupy only 20, 30, or 50 lines. The whole of the popular interest in America is really centred in the State Legislatures, where all the affairs of the State are managed. The case cited by my hon. Friend (Mr. Bryce), as a reason why the *clôture*, as proposed in this Resolution, should be not only introduced here, but that it should be strengthened by further legislation, falls absolutely to the ground, from the fact I have just stated. Personally, I am quite in sympathy with the object of the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) in bringing in these Rules. The acceleration of Business I quite agree with; but the method adopted seems to me to be utterly futile. It is quite clear that the object is to put down what is commonly known in the House as Obstruction. Obstruction has been practised in Parliament by every Party. To pass these

Rules to put down Obstruction, anybody with two or three years' experience in the House must, after a few moments' consideration, agree with me when I say it is completely futile. If you give me a dozen Members who will do as I tell them—[*A laugh.*] Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to put myself in the position of a Leader; but if I had a dozen Members who would speak when I desired upon the subjects I asked them to speak upon, I would drive, as we say in my country, a coach and six through all your Rules. I will show you how it is done. [*Laughter.*] I am speaking quite seriously on the subject. Let us take the case of the Private Business of the House. There are frequently six or seven, perhaps a dozen, Private Bills set down for consideration. Upon any one of these Bills any Member is entitled to speak, and no Speaker would venture to prevent a Member exercising such a right. There is not one Private Bill which does not raise questions of considerable importance. Only the other day, I raised an important question upon a Private Bill, and though my Motion was only discussed for three-quarters of an hour, it was passed unanimously. Again, take the Orders of the Day. There are often as many as 40 Orders of the Day. Any Member can speak upon every one of them, and no Speaker would prevent a Member speaking on every one, so long as the remarks he made were pertinent to the subject. But as the Rules are to be passed, all I can say is, let them be tried. I hope they will succeed. There is another point to which I wish to draw attention, and that is what I suppose will be called the 2 o'clock Rule. The Government propose that the Business of the House should commence at 2 o'clock. Now, if we consider what the composition of the House is, we shall find that the large majority of Members have some private occupation—they are either professional or commercial men, and to ask either professional or commercial men to attend in the House at 2 o'clock is virtually to ask them to abandon their business. No commercial man can safely leave his business until after banking hours, until after half-past 3. Professional men are in much the same position; and, therefore, if the proposal to meet at 2 o'clock is agreed

to, the result will inevitably be to throw back the representation into the hands of the moneyed classes and the idle classes. ["Oh, oh!"] I do not use that phrase discourteously; I wish I was a moneyed man myself. I hope the Leader of the House will take this point into his serious consideration before it comes up for settlement. It must be borne in mind that Members have Committees to attend, and that it is hard enough, at the present time, for those who are on a Committee or Commission to find any time at all for their private business. If, in addition to attending Committees and Commissions, you ask Members to come here at 2 o'clock, you ask that which is simply impossible. As a matter of fact, the Government will have possession of the House from 2 o'clock until 4 every day, and will have it in their power to rush measures through without any interference on the part of men who have had large and long experience in commercial and business matters. Is it possible to adopt such a Rule with any fairness to men who are engaged in commercial pursuits? It is just possible that the alteration would result in the organizing of a system of Obstruction which will keep the Business dilly-dallying from 2 till 4 o'clock, at which time Business men can come down to the House.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."
—(*Mr. Flynn.*)

MR. W. H. SMITH: I cannot help thinking that, at this hour of the night (12.25), it is hardly fair that the debate should be adjourned. A general discussion has been taken for the purpose of eliciting information with regard to the scope of the Rules. A general discussion was not allowed in 1882, and it was only taken now in the hope that it would save the time of the House; when we come to deal with the proposals in detail, I think the feeling of the House will be that this discussion has lasted long enough, and that we should now proceed to the consideration of the Amendments of which the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Col. Nolan),

have given Notice. I trust the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Flynn) will withdraw his Motion for adjournment, and that we may be allowed to proceed with the real Business which is before the House.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I must confess that for two reasons, I am greatly surprised at the way the Motion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Flynn) has been encountered. The first reason is that everyone admits we are engaged in discussing a very comprehensive and far-reaching scheme. This is only the second night which has been devoted to its consideration, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has reminded us that the consideration of a somewhat similar Rule, proposed a few years ago, occupied 19 sittings. The second reason is, that I am informed that some hours ago, the Government agreed, with a very important Member of the House, to consent to the adjournment to-night, provided there was no effort made to extend the debate beyond to-morrow.

MR. W. H. SMITH: On the distinct understanding that the general discussion be closed to-morrow, I shall not oppose the Motion for Adjournment. No indication of that character, however, was made by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Flynn).

MR. SEXTON: I believe the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) was already aware that on these Benches there was no desire to extend the debate beyond to-morrow. Certainly, so far as the Irish Members are concerned, there is no desire to prolong the debate beyond to-morrow.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Then I consent to the adjournment.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate further adjourned till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

—o—

POST OFFICE MAIL CONTRACT (HIGHLAND FISHERIES COMPANY, LIMITED.)

RESOLUTION.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I should like to know from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jack-

Mr. W. H. Smith

son), whether it is not possible for an arrangement to be made, whereby the mail train at night can run rightthrough. At present, travellers have to wait two hours at Stirling before they can go on to Oban.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): There have been negotiations proceeding with the view of improving the train accommodation, and I believe they resulted in an additional service of trains.

Ordered, That the Contract with the Highland Fisheries Company, Limited, for the conveyance of Mails between Oban, Coll, Tyree, Barra, and Loch Boisdale, be approved.—(Mr. Jackson.)

COUNTY COURTS (EXPENSES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jackson, Bill to amend the Acts relating to County Courts so far as regards the payment of certain expenses connected with County Courts, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Jackson, Mr. Attorney General, and Sir Herbert Maxwell.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 177.]

SANITARY REGISTRATION OF BUILDINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lacaita, Bill to provide for the Sanitary Registration of Buildings, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Lacaita, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Guyer Hunter, Dr. Cameron, and Sir Henry Roscoe.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 178.]

MERCHANDISE (FRAUDULENT MARKS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to amend and consolidate the Law relating to the fraudulent marking of Merchandise, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Mundella, Mr. Acland, Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Bernard Coleridge, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, and Mr. Henry Wilson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 179.]

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 23rd February, 1887.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*Withdrawn*—Free Libraries Acts Consolidation* [115].

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [THIRD NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question,

"That, at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members." — (*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I cannot hope to speak upon this question with the same authority as the hon. Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall (Mr. Courtney) who, as a Parliamentary mechanic, addressed the House last night. My experience has not been sufficiently long to constitute me an authority in any respect, and I venture to say that I only approach the consideration of these Rules of Procedure as a Parliamentary apprentice who has watched the work done in this House carefully and closely since I had the honour of becoming a Member. It may be considered something presumptuous for a comparatively young Member—speaking on a subject so technical as this—to preface his observations by the statement that he intends to take an

entirely different line from that which has been taken by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have spoken from the Front Benches. I conceive, Sir, that in this important matter—the question of reforming the Procedure of this House—Her Majesty's Government are altogether pursuing a wrong tack; that they have, so to speak, failed to diagnose correctly the case that has been laid before them, and, therefore, that the remedies which they prescribe will be utterly ineffectual to bring about anything like a restoration to a healthy state. Taking the plans of the Government as a whole, I think they not unnaturally divide themselves into different heads. I will not take them in the same order as the Government, who commenced with closure. I will take first the arrangement of our working hours, and the working time of the House; then the important question of the devolution of Business, and, thirdly, the closure, or the restriction of debate. The Government have put the last and the least essential of these questions at the forefront of their propositions. They have looked upon the least as the greatest, and they have altogether failed to estimate accurately the gravity of the position with which they have to deal. Consequently, the remedies they propose fail to carry out their intentions. Taking first the Rules of Procedure, as they relate to the working hours of the House, I maintain that the House should set itself earnestly to consider by what means it can improve the arrangement of the working hours—by what means it can reform the present system under which such a continuous waste of time goes on. If, in addition to that, the House can make a large, and, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) stated, a frank and full system of devolution, I believe there would be no necessity whatever for the third part of the programme which the Government have put first, and no necessity whatever for the Rule which refers to closure. I think they would have been better engaged at the present moment in repealing the Standing Order of 1882 in regard to closure than in endeavouring at the present time to make it more stringent. With regard to the important question of the arrangement of the working hours of the House,

I find that, practically speaking, under present arrangements, this House works on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for about four-and-a-half hours on each day. It is possible, by a slight alteration of the Rules which the Government propose to introduce, to make a working day of eight hours. At present the House meets at a quarter to 4; then we have prayers, followed by the consideration of Private Bills, and Questions and Notices of Motion; and finally we reach the debate on whatever subject of magnitude or importance that is before the House. But, Sir, for all practical purposes—for the consideration of all great questions of legislation—I maintain that this House sits for only four-and-a-half hours a-day; and it is perfectly impossible, without throwing an undue amount of labour on hon. Members of the House, to make secure a working day of eight hours. In regard to my contention that this House works for only four-and-a-half hours a-day, I should like to ask the attention of the House to the statement which I am about to make. This House meets at a quarter to 4, and after you have taken the Chair, Sir, whatever Private Business is on the Paper is disposed of. Under any well ordered system of devolution, a large amount of that Private Business could be delegated to Committees, or done elsewhere. I will not venture to suggest how it is to be done; but we are all agreed that it could be done. By the time Notices of Motion and Questions have been disposed of, half-past 5 has been reached. The debate then commences, and practically ceases at half-past 7. I know that the House continues sitting; but what I maintain is that practically it does no work. A great deal of stress has been laid on the fact that our debates are long. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of this House (Mr. W. H. Smith) said in regard to this important question, that on the very last debate of any importance we had—namely, the debate upon the Address—we spent 16 or 17 days. Why is that? It is because none of the big guns on the Front Benches will speak while the House is empty. If you had a proper business-like system—the House meeting at a certain hour, having a proper and a definite dinner hour—it might be made to work continuously from 3 o'clock to

half-past 7, then adjourn for an hour for dinner, and resuming at half-past 8, carry on the debate until half-past 12, so that you would really have eight-and-a-half business hours. If the House sat for a shorter time, but not continuously, we might not have so many subjects; but we should nevertheless get through a far larger amount of work, and no body of hon. Members would lay themselves open to the charge of obstruction. I would ask, in connection with this subject, the attention of the House to this fact—that after commencing a debate of any importance, after the big guns have led off, some leading Member moves the adjournment. The next day a right hon. Gentleman opens the debate, and he is followed by some of the many conspicuous and able right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. Then what occurs? After he has delivered his speech, there is a general exodus from the House, and practically from 7 or half-past 7 up to 9 or 10 o'clock the time is occupied, perforce, by hon. Members who must keep the debate going until other big guns come in and take up the debate in a leisurely and often in a languid fashion. The debate is then adjourned at half-past 12 without any considerable amount of work having been done. Her Majesty's Government have made some proposals in regard to the dinner hour. I contend that if they went further and made a radical change in the working hours of the House, and the arrangement of Business during those working hours, they would have a real system of devolution and there would be no necessity for placing this first Rule before us for consideration. I should like to look upon this House as an ideal Parliament, or a Parliament at any rate doing practical work as a working Legislative Assembly. This House has been called, and not incorrectly, the first Assembly of Gentlemen in the World. I believe it has deserved that reputation, and I hope it will always continue to deserve and enjoy it; but it should also strive to obtain the reputation in addition of being something more than an Assembly of gentlemen of pleasure. It should be an Assembly of working Members, and instead of gentlemen coming in in full dress at 10 or 11 o'clock at night when all sensible men have finished the Business of the day—if, instead of coming

here in full dress at those most unreasonable hours, they had remained in their places to discuss the Business of the House; we should have a real working day of 8 hours, and there would be no necessity for these proposals to enable the Government to grapple with the difficulty created to a large extent by themselves, and the system to which they have given their sanction and approval. With regard to the important question of devolution, I have already stated that my experience would not justify me in making any extended suggestions on the point. I have said that in my opinion Private Bills could be relegated to Committees. The greater portion of such Private Bill legislation could be done altogether outside this House, being brought up here for ultimate sanction. A great deal has been said upon the appointment of Committees to consider that matter. The proposals in reference to this question either go too far or they do not go far enough. Either this House is able to deal with the Business which comes before it, or it is utterly unable to do so. I think the experience of the last two Sessions will convince all the reflective Members of this Assembly that the Government proposals do not go far enough. I listened with pleasure to the statements of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian on this important question. He is in favour of a large devolution, and he considers the proposals of the Government totally inadequate to meet the exigencies of the case. If a Government have the courage of their opinions and if they have in their minds large and drastic proposals, why not come forward with them? They neither do one thing nor the other, but they stand shivering on the brink of the stream afraid to take the plunge. Trembling with timidity they have borrowed the proposals which have been suggested from time to time in the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and those who act with him. I have contended that if those portions of Procedure which relate to the better arrangement of the working hours of this House, and the proper employment of its time in all its details, were carried out, together with a well-considered and well-arranged plan of devolution, there would be no necessity for the system of *clôture* which, in the opinion of the Government, ought to

stand first. It seems to me a very remarkable fact that the Government, in putting this *clôture* of debate in the very forefront of their proposals, have made no reference to the proposal in regard to *clôture* contained in the recommendations of the Select Committee which reported in June last. I have looked through the Reports prepared by the Chief Secretary and by the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and in neither of them, and certainly, not in the Report of the Select Committee, is there any mention of these sweeping and comprehensive proposals. I do not know whether the Government intend to spring a surprise upon the House, but it certainly looks very like it. This proposal of the *clôture* is one which means restriction of debate and diminution of the liberty of the hon. Members of this House. I oppose it because it is vexatious and oppressive, and, I believe, when it comes to be discussed in this House, the various Amendments which have been placed against it will receive full, free, and fair consideration; and that the supporters of the Government will not be led, in a spirit of blind obedience, to swallow every proposal the Government may make simply because it may meet, in their eyes, the present necessities of the times. I have spoken on this subject as a private Member, and it seems to me that if this proposal of the *clôture* of debate becomes one of the Standing Orders of the House, private Members will have no guarantee whatever that to them will be accorded their undoubted right to be Representatives of the House. Every hon. Member of this House claims, or ought to claim, to have an equal voice before the Chair on any subject that may come up for discussion. I do not, by that, mean to convey the idea that I am in favour of prolixity of debate; but I maintain, as the very first principle of a Representative Assembly, that every private Member, no matter in what part of the House he may sit, has an equal right with the First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Leader of the Opposition, or any hon. Member who has been, or is, in the Government, to give his opinion on any proposal that may be brought before the Chair, and take an adequate part in the discussions and deliberations of this House. It was pointed out, with great force, by the hon.

[Third Night.]

Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall, last night, that, in this proposal of closure, there is an element of very great danger, and it is this—any constituency sending a Member here expects him to represent their ideas upon the great political questions of the day. Those ideas may be outvoted in the House time after time; but, at any rate, the Representative of that constituency will have expressed his ideas and those of his constituents, and they cannot complain if, after full discussion, their Representative is outvoted. But, in this proposal of the *clôture*, Her Majesty's Government go much further, because they say to the Representatives of the people that, in certain circumstances, and under certain conditions—perhaps by a sudden whim of the Government—such Representatives shall not have the right of expressing their opinion on any subject before the House; and if this proposal becomes a Standing Order of the House the constituencies will find that it will very greatly affect their liberties. It also trenches very dangerously on the rights of the minority in this House. Of course, we know that in the plenitude of their power, and out of the abundance and generosity of their hearts, the hon. Members who speak for the Government will tell us that the rights of minorities will be fully protected in this House in future, and that there is no necessity to fear that the proposal to summarily close a debate will often be exercised by the Government. These things may be said when we are calmly discussing the technicalities of the Procedure of the House; but, when the heat of debate comes on; when the storm and fury of contending political factions are aroused; when subjects of great importance come before the House for consideration, who can guarantee that a Government with a strong majority at their back will be tender of the rights of minorities whom they believe to be in the wrong, and whom, up to a certain point, they believe to be obstructive? So far as Obstruction is concerned, I am of opinion that the common sense of this or any other Assembly will always decide whether a debate has lasted long enough. Obstruction only becomes necessary when other opportunities are denied to hon. Members for bringing their views under the consideration of

the House. I offer my most strenuous opposition to the first Rule put forward by the Government, because it throws an onerous duty upon the Chair. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) acknowledged this in the opening remarks of his speech he made on Monday night. In whatever quarter of the House hon. Members sit, all respect and desire to uphold the honour and dignity of the Chair; notwithstanding all that has been said about the question of the closure of debate, whether initiated by a private Member or not, it will undoubtedly have the effect of largely interfering with that honour and dignity. The honour and dignity of the Chair depend on its acknowledged impartiality, and there should be no suspicion of that impartiality. There has been none in the past, and there should be none in the future. But it should be placed beyond the reach of accident, and no Government, no matter how powerful, no matter how large the majority at its back, should have it in its power to encourage the faintest murmur of dissatisfaction in this direction. The Speaker of this House has always defended the rights of minorities. I believe, Sir, that you and your successors will continue to do so. I believe that the traditions of the Chair in that respect will always be upheld, but I maintain that it would not be right to place power in the hands of even the wisest of us, and facilities, to which we may add temptations, to use that power on the part of the Government in Office. The First Lord of the Treasury said, on Monday, with regard to the Chair—

“You are also to secure the duration of debate necessary for the conduct of Business. . . . That is a step in the right direction.”

Aye; but who is to decide that? Undoubtedly the initiative lies with some hon. Member of the Government, and if this proposal becomes a Rule of the House, and we can assume, Sir, that in your place some Speaker of less firmness and wisdom should sit; who can tell that, with a powerful Government, and with such an individual in the Chair, the Speaker might not become the mere registrar of the will of the majority of this House? Turning now, for a few moments, to the question of devolution, I think it is a question which will excite

far more interest than any other proposal of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has pointed out its importance; but you may have a devolution relating to Private Business, and referring larger matters to Standing Committees or to Grand Committees; but until you go the length of a devolution of Business on matters of great importance relating to Ireland, all your systems of devolution, I believe, will end in a most unsatisfactory manner, and will produce no permanent result whatever. In whatever way we may settle the question—in whatever way we may tinker at the matter and introduce these small questions of Procedure—if you are in earnest in desiring to restore the efficiency of this House, you must withdraw the most difficult, and dangerous, and burning of domestic questions, and apply yourselves to the systematic arrangement of your own Business; when you shall have given over to another country a large portion of the Business which now vexes and disturbs the soul of this House, you will have rendered it possible for the House to do its Business efficiently and satisfactorily for the benefit of all classes, and for the preservation of the unity of the Empire; but not till then.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): Sir, I think the Rules proposed by the Government deserve the support of all those who wish to see the Business of the country expeditiously carried on. I am pledged to my constituents to oppose closure by a bare or simple majority; but if I understand aright the Rules proposed, although it is intended to give this power to a bare majority, yet it seems to me that the exercise of that power will always be subject to the approval of the Speaker; and with that limitation I hold that the closure by a simple majority is certainly the best and most effectual way of dealing with unduly prolonged debates. The necessity for securing the approval of the Speaker will, in my opinion, sufficiently guard the rights of hon. Members, and I am certain that the rights of minorities could not be entrusted to safer hands than those of you, Sir, who have so worthily maintained the traditions of this Office. With regard to the subject of devolution, which has been touched upon by one or two hon. Members in

the course of the debate, I have no fear that the Government will hesitate at some future date to deal with it, and when the Local Government Bill is produced the congestion of Business will be dealt with in a way which will probably enable us to leave the details of many questions to other bodies. I think, Sir, that the amount of latitude given to discussion since I have been in this House is abnormally large, and I should rejoice to see it very considerably curtailed. I observe on the Paper an Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage), and that Amendment I shall do all in my power to support, inasmuch as it proposes that the period of discussion on the Address shall be limited to three days. This appears to me to be, under ordinary circumstances, sufficient for the purpose.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now discussing an Amendment on the Paper which it will be only in Order for him to discuss when that Amendment is arrived at in due course.

MR. DE LISLE: I regret that my inexperience of the Rules of the House has led me to refer to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Great Grimsby. I should like to add that I am in favour of this qualification—that the debate on the Address should not exceed three days without the consent of the House—shall be a general rule, applicable to any and every debate. Another regulation that I should like to see receive the sanction of the House is that the speeches of hon. Members not proposing a Resolution or Motion, and not Privy Councillors, nor Members of the Government, should at all times be confined within a period of 20 minutes' duration, which would have the effect of adding to the force of their remarks and also allowing the attention of the House to be more concentrated upon them. I should also like to see a restriction of the practice of blocking Bills; my views on this subject being that each hon. Member should have the power of blocking one Bill. There are 670 hon. Members of the House, and my proposal would certainly meet the requirements of the case; whereas it seems to be a great anomaly that one hon. Member should have it in his power to block all the Bills on the Paper at once. Finally, I consider that the alteration in the hours

[Third Night.]

of Business, which have been proposed, are in the interest of those who have other duties besides those of this House to attend to. It will, however, be always advantageous to the commonwealth that the bulk of the Representatives of the people shall be drawn from the more cultured and leisured classes. We are the Representatives of the people, and we are proud of it; but in their normal condition the people will always prefer to see themselves represented by those who have been aptly termed "their natural leaders"—that is, the more public spirited of the cultured and leisured classes. And having now nearly occupied the time I have myself named for the limitation of hon. Members' speeches, as a junior Member of the House I will conclude by expressing a hope that the proposed Rules will, without undue delay, be carried into effect.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): Last night the hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) and the hon. Member for King's County (Mr. Molloy) alluded to the Rules in force in the Congress of America, and a consideration of them will enable us to form some opinion on the subject before us. The principal evil which we have to deal with is that of too much speaking or prolixity of debate. Now, the procedure in the American Congress, analogous to the 1st Resolution, is meant to deal with that evil. The three noticeable points of the American system of moving the Previous Question, are—first, that it is very frequently resorted to; secondly, that it is common to all the Houses of Representatives in the United States; and, thirdly, that the Speaker is entirely kept out of the matter altogether. I look with particular jealousy upon the power given to the Speaker in the Rule proposed by Her Majesty's Government, when I think how it may be extended; and I see there are already proposals put down to extend this new function to determine whether, on a Motion for Adjournment, a certain matter is of urgent public importance or not; he is to determine, according to a suggested Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler), what Questions may be put to Ministers; and, according to the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Salt), he is to fix the duration of the debate on the Address. Now, all these points

seem to require not the extension, but the creation of a new power in the Speaker which, I think, is foreign altogether to the position which he occupies in this Assembly. In America the Previous Question can be moved by any Member without Notice; but in practice it is almost invariably moved, after Notice, by the Member in charge of the Bill or Motion under discussion, or by a Member of the Government. Taking, casually, a number of Congressional Records, I find a single reference will make this practice plain to the House. On the 10th December last, there was a very important Bill before Congress on Presidential Elections; the discussion had lasted two days, and the Member in charge of it had given Notice that upon the following day, at a certain time, he would ask the House to order the Previous Question. Notice was given on the 9th December that the Division would be taken on the 10th December, 20 minutes after the debate had opened. When the House met, the Member in charge rose and repeated his Notice; the debate went on for the 20 minutes; the Previous Question was then proposed; a question arose as to an Amendment which a Member wished to be inserted in the Bill; but the Question was put and agreed to without any Division at all. Well, Sir, I think it would be well if we could adopt some arrangement that fair Notice should be given to all the Members of this House, so that we might know distinctly whether a discussion is to last for several days or for a few hours only, and for how long. Hon. Members will have noticed that great debates have a tendency to flag on the second or third night's discussion; and when it thus becomes manifest that the interest in the proceedings is diminishing, I think Ministers, or Members in charge of a Motion, might well give Notice of their intention to move that, at the next Sitting or at a specified time, the debate should be terminated. Then, Sir, I think procedure analogous to the American system of moving the Previous Question might be adopted with great advantage for application to private Members' Motions on Tuesday nights. Were it adopted, each Member who had a Motion on the Paper would, on moving it, state that after the lapse of a certain time he would ask the House to adopt

the Previous Question, and bring the debate to an end. In that way we could have a number of Motions discussed in a single night, and at fixed hours. Taking the Paper of last night, there are four or five Motions of Private Members, the first being the important one of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) on Welsh Disestablishment. Each Member, in introducing his Motion, would give Notice that in a specified time he would ask the debate to be terminated and a division taken. As to the amount of time for each Motion, it would not be giving too little or too much time to a Motion, such as that of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn), if the Previous Question were moved after four hours' discussion. That is a Motion of special interest, and for such the time I have suggested would be reasonable; but for less important Resolutions, if you allocated an hour and a-half or two hours to them, the Members interested would endeavour to come down to the House in order to make their Motions, four or five of which could then be discussed on private Members' nights, and hon. Members would have the advantage of knowing with certainty when the discussions in which they desired to take part would begin. The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) last night assured the House that there was no point with relation to the Procedure of the House more urgent, and with regard to which greater interest was felt in the country, than the fact that private Members cannot get a fair and adequate opportunity of ventilating questions which are of interest and importance to their constituents. It is deplorable that a Member should have letters, and letters continually sent to him, pointing out some grievance or some small flaw in administration for which, if the attention of the House were directed to it, a remedy could be found; and that he should always have to reply that he believed in the reality of the grievance, and that, so far as his ability went, he would endeavour to remedy it; that he would put a Notice with regard to it on the Paper; but that he was obliged to add that the Notice would, in all probability, remain there during the Session, because, under the existing Rules, no opportunity would present itself for obtaining discussion upon it. I

therefore venture to hope that the House will look at the 1st Resolution not merely as one tending to put down Obstruction, but also as one which they should, if possible, modify in such a way as will make it an effective means by which the majority of the House, and those interested in Public Business, may be able to acquire control over its time for the purpose of the adequate discussion both of large questions of importance to the nation and those of great interest to the different sections of the community.

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) : Sir, I desire to say that I am somewhat disappointed at the nature of the reforms of the Procedure suggested by Her Majesty's Government. I think that no closure can place us in a position to meet the exigencies of the case. I think it would be well if from the Front Opposition Bench there should be some attempt made to grapple with the real causes of the break down in this House. These causes are not merely the fact that many hon. Members are endowed with eloquence, and like to hear themselves speak; it may be a cause, but not the principal cause. One of the chief causes is the great number of stages through which a Bill has to pass—the First and Second Readings, the Committee stage, the Report and Third Reading. I ask how can any private Member, under these regulations, expect to get a Bill through the House? There is then the cause of delay due to the manner in which the Estimates are discussed. A great number of nights are spent in this way, and I say that, in Committee of the Whole House, we cannot do justice to the Estimates. We cannot call upon a Minister for further information to assist us than what he may have ready at hand; and the discussion itself is of such a loose and unsatisfactory character, that I believe we owe to this cause an enormous waste of time. Another cause of the waste of time is the practice of talking out a Bill. Let the House, for one moment, consider the position of a Member whose whole labour is thrown away by having his Bill talked out, and whose chance cannot come again. Again, Bills are often brought to a Second Reading; but, before they get into Committee, then comes the so-called Massacre of the Innocents, and the whole work has to

[Third Night.]

be done over again. It would seem that the House has done everything that it could possibly do to cripple itself, and prevent it dealing with the enormous mass of Business that has to be got through. Some private Members take an interest, and find occupation in the debates of the House, but they are a rapidly decreasing quantity; there are others who do not wish to occupy the time of the House, but who are really anxious that some Bills should have a chance of getting through, and they may have come to this House for the purpose of advancing a particular question, but yet they never have an opportunity of getting any measure through the House. As an instance of this, I may mention the case of the hon. Baronet the Member for Cumberland (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), who made in this House a Motion with reference to Local Option. The House pronounced in favour of the principle, and what was the consequence? The hon. Baronet has tried to get two Bills through the House, but found it impossible to do so. The same may be said with reference to the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill; almost everyone was in favour of the principle, but the House did not have an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon the Question until the sixth year of its existence. It is perfectly intolerable that this state of things should be continued, and I say it is impossible that we can retain the good opinion of the country if we permit these delays. I may be asked what I propose as a remedy. I should propose, in the first instance, that, as has already been suggested by the Solicitor General, Bills should be continued from Session to Session. This has been proposed by the present Prime Minister, and by others, and I trust the Government will see their way also to introduce something of the kind. Then there is another thing which might be done—the House I think might be satisfied with one opportunity of considering the principle, and one opportunity of considering the details of a Bill. The First Reading might be taken or negatived without discussion, and the Second Reading and Committee Stage referred to the Grand Committee, and then on the Third Reading. On Report, the House would be able to decide both on the principle and details of the measure.

Mr. R. T. Reid

This would undoubtedly give us more chance of getting through work than we have at present. I remember a Bill of my own that, after it had been with great trouble carried to a Third Reading, was defeated by three votes. One more proposal is that you should refer the Estimates to a really strong Committee of a non-Party character, who shall be thoroughly impressed with the desire for economy, and until that is done I am satisfied we shall do very little in saving time. With reference to the proposal I have placed on the paper—namely, that Scotch Bills should, at all events, be referred to a Grand Committee, I do not wish to claim for Scotland any exception or favour over England; but if English Members are not prepared to adopt this simple method for themselves, I do trust they will concede that we, who are somewhat more advanced in politics, may be allowed to make an effort to manage our affairs. I regret to say that in the proposals of the Government I do not see anything that will really facilitate the Business of the House. I do not want to impute to right hon. Gentlemen opposite that they do not want to effect this; I believe that they do wish it, and I believe that if they had very much extended their proposals in the direction of devolution to Grand Committees, they would have secured the support, not only of Members opposite, but of those on this side of the House. Finally, Sir, I may say that the proposals of the Government, so far as they go, are excellent and prudent, but they do not, in my opinion, go far enough, and as we are probably about to spend some weeks in considering them, I wish the Government had made an effort to deal with the Question in a way commensurate with its importance.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): If I had the idea that these Rules of Procedure would cure the evil they are intended to meet, I should be only too ready to express my approval of them. But I believe that evil will never be cured until we adopt some more radical measures than are here offered to us. With regard to the first Rule, it seems to me that the difference between it and the existing Rule is so slight that I very much question the prudence of the Government in putting it forward, seeing also that in the midst

of the great pressure of Business its discussion is likely to occupy a large portion of the time of the House. I cannot but think that it is imprudent for the Government to press for so slight a change at a time when they have just submitted to the House Estimates involving large Supplementary Votes, which must be got through before the end of the financial year. Under the circumstances, it seems to me that they would have done better to have kept back the Rule relating to closure, and gone forward with the others. I should like to know how it is intended to reconcile the proposed hours for the sitting of the House with the system of the Committees upstairs. The Committee work is the most important part of the Business of the House; and I cannot suppose that the Government intend that the Committees should meet at 10 o'clock in the morning. This would be too great a tax upon the energies of Members; and, therefore, if you change the hours of sitting of the House, I do not think you will get very much work done. We shall certainly want some time for our meals, to salute our families, and to get through other exterior duties. It seems to me that to carry out the proposed system is an impossibility under present circumstances; and, if that is so now, how much more impossible would it be when you come to deal with that further extension of the principle of the Grand Committee which the Government propose? It seems to me that we must have some explanation from the Government with regard to the position of Committees. I cannot suppose that it is intended that Grand Committees should sit when the House is in Session; that, I believe, would be impossible, for the simple reason that a man cannot be in two places at the same time. You propose that you should abandon your very late sittings, and I am very glad of it; but, again, I ask how are you going to manage with regard to the Grand Committees? I am distinctly in favour of the voluntary dinner system myself; and if you bind us down to a particular hour, I am of opinion that the whole system founded on it will collapse.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Sir, I listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle), and, so far as I could gather from it, I understand that he has

pledged himself against *clôture* by a simple majority; but that he intended to vote for it because, when you interfere with debate in this House, you do so with "musical harmony." I venture to doubt whether these Rules will shorten our debates; to be brief, I may say that, as a matter of fact, it is impossible to put a quart of liquor into a pint pot; and so long as the House has to get through so much work, we may be perfectly certain that the work will be badly done, whatever Rules are proposed. With regard to the length of our debates, I think that the chief offenders in this respect are the Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury and Front Opposition Benches. Whenever a Minister has introduced Business, some Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench is sure to rise, and so high and mighty are they that they always consider it necessary to speak at exceeding length. I could never understand why half-a-dozen Ministers, or subordinate Ministers, should speak on every measure, because I say—without intending any offence to them—that they are precisely the Members whom the House does not want to hear. If a private Member speaks we hear an independent opinion on the matter; but that is not so with those who speak from the Treasury Bench, for then one does not know whether they are uttering their own opinions or only speaking to a brief. Hour after hour is thus consumed by the two Front Benches. If I may venture to say so, there is a nagging spirit on both those Benches. An hon. or right hon. Gentleman gets up and endeavours to show that a Gentleman opposite has contradicted himself, and this is repeated on the other side. I do not like to use the term *fish-wife*; but the discussion is somewhat like that between two washerwomen. But, Sir, I must say that independent Members are not free from blame in this matter—they might certainly be briefer than they now are. The House constantly hears long speeches by private Members, just as if nothing had been said upon the subject before. Why is this? It is because they are unable to speak briefly, or because they are anxious that their constituencies should feel that their Member is doing his duty by them. Those speeches are reported fully in the local papers, which are really the bane of the proceedings in this House. A column

[Third Night.]

of *The Times* means about 20 minutes' speaking, and I do not see why any hon. Member should not consider that in that space he could do his duty to his country and his constituency. For my part, I should greatly prefer a ten minutes' rule to the Rule of the closure. After a debate has been commenced by the Minister in charge of the Resolution and a reply made, let any Member be allowed to make the Motion that no one be allowed to speak for more than ten minutes on the question. I wish to know from Her Majesty's Government what is the nature of the proposed clôture? The Vice President of the Council, at a meeting last night, said that the power of closing the debate is to be vested in the Minister of the day. I should like to know whether that is so, because I understand here that it is to be left entirely to the House and to any Member of it, with the concurrence of the Speaker. In my opinion, Sir, nothing can be more objectionable than that this power should be left to the Leader of the House, because, to some extent, the Leader of the House is necessarily in the position of a partizan; and one of these days we shall find a Leader of the House preventing any opposition being offered to his proposals. Then we are told that the consent of the Chair is to be obtained. But how is it to be obtained? Is the Member to rise in his place and ask for it, or is he to go privately to the Chair and ask the consent of the Speaker? I think, however, that the words, "with the consent of the Speaker," are altogether objectionable, because the Speaker will not be acting as the interpreter of the voice of the House, but upon his own judgment. Then there is the objection that the Speaker would thus become the protector of the majority instead of the minority. Well, Sir, I think it would be better to substitute some such words as "unless the Speaker expresses his disapproval." Then we are told that the Rule may be put in force as soon as it is passed. I think that is altogether wrong, because the closure is merely one brick, as it were, of a large building, and I do not think that advantage ought to be taken of the fact that it happens to be placed before the other Rules in order to apply it to the closure of discussion upon any of the other Rules. For that reason I trust that the first Rule

will not be applied, if it be passed by the House, until the other Rules have received the sanction of this House.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Mr. Speaker, I remember a speech which was delivered in 1882 on the closure by my hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere). He had then a very different scheme to that he proposes to-day. He suggested, in 1882, that all Questions should be debated for half-an-hour, and that, when the half-hour had elapsed, the vote of the House should be taken. I am glad to find that now he is disposed to amplify somewhat the facilities for debate. But I do not propose to follow my hon. Friend upon the question of the clôture. I think that the general question has been fully discussed to-day and at the two previous sittings. The main point of difference seems to be the interference of the Chair. My hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) has an Amendment on the Paper which will raise that question distinctly by itself. I will, therefore, leave the question of the closure of debate, and say a few words more by way of suggestion than criticism, in reference to the two other branches of this reform, which my right hon. Friend the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) described as the devolution upon Committees, and the limiting of the hours of sitting. I take it, that whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the best mode of devolution, we must accept the decision of the Government to revive the system of Grand Committees. That system was never fully tried. We had two Committees, and of all the valuable measures passed by the Parliament of 1880, and there were many, I do not think any two were in their general effects on the community more valuable than the Bankruptcy Act and the Patent Act, both of which were passed by a Grand Committee. It has been said there would be obstruction in Grand Committees. I had the honour to sit upon the Grand Committee presided over by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), and, though it was said that one Member — neither a lawyer nor an Irishman — addressed the Committee upwards of 900 times, 99 out of every 100 speeches made in the Committee did not exceed five minutes. The Committee met as business men to do real work,

and I think the work they turned out will bear comparison with a great many measures passed by Parliament. There was another Grand Committee, called the Law Committee. The legal element was very predominant on that Committee. The legal element is a very good element; but it is like many other good things, you must not have too much of it. It wants qualification and restriction, and I am not quite sure that a body in which the legal element predominates is the best body for the reform of the law. If the Law Committee had received a greater infusion of the commercial element, perhaps it would have done its work better. The friction which arose in the Committee was owing to the fact that the House did not settle the main principle on the second reading of the Bill. The question about which the dispute arose was the constitution of the Court of Criminal Appeal, and it was raised immediately the Committee sat. The House was in favour of a Court of Criminal Appeal; but when the Committee came to deal with the Bill the question arose whether the appeal was to extend to sentences as well as to verdicts, and there the Government came into collision with the majority of the Committee. I do not think that, under such circumstances, the failure of the Grand Committee system in that case is at all surprising. What I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) to consider is this, whether it would not be desirable to do away with the distinctions of Law and Justice, Trade, Commerce, and Agriculture? It is a very difficult thing to classify Bills, and to say one is a Law Bill, and another is a Trade Bill, and another is an Agricultural Bill. The Bankruptcy Bill was as much a Law Bill as a Trade Bill. The Government propose to effect a reform in the ceremonies connected with the marriage of Nonconformists. There will be a general consensus of opinion that such a reform is needed, but it cannot be classified as one either of Law, Trade, Commerce, or Shipping; and yet it could not be discussed with so great advantage in the House as in one of the Grand Committees, in which you will bring to bear the experience of the men best competent to form an opinion. There are many Bills, the details of which would

be far better settled in a Grand Committee, but which you cannot classify as Law, or as Commercial Bills. There is also another objection to the present system. If you call a Committee, a Committee of Law, all lawyers expect to be put on it. If you call a Committee, a Committee of Shipping, you will have Members telling you that they are authorities on shipping and commerce, and claiming to be appointed on the Committee. Let us appoint two or three Standing or Grand Committees, and refer to them any Bill which the House thinks proper. In that way, we should very much tend to promote the efficiency of the Grand Committees. I strongly advocated the appointment of these Committees in 1882. I had faith in them then, and I am not prepared to abandon them until we have seen them fairly tested. In this way we shall do a great deal in the way of devolution. Now, I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House a very practical question. If the hours of the House are to be limited as proposed—I am not objecting to the limitation of the hours—how is the ordinary Business of the Government to be carried on? How, where, and when is the second class Departmental legislation, which is needed every Session, and which must be carried on in the interest of the country, to pass? The full-dress debate upon first class Government measures will invariably last until 12 o'clock, when there is to be an automatic cessation of the discussion. You will then have only half-an-hour, and without imputing to anyone any desire to obstruct, if a Member knows that he may wreck a little Bill by prolonging the debate half-an-hour, he may be very much tempted to do so. Then comes the question of Supply. Is it possible to get the Votes under the proposed circumstances? The chances are that, instead of the discussion of the Estimates becoming contracted, it will become enlarged. It is not for me to make suggestions; but I would ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. H. Smith) to consider whether if he adheres, as I presume he will, to the principle of some fixed hour for the House rising, he will not allow a wider margin than half-an-hour between the contentious Business of the day and the Business which is non-contentious, and in which only a limited number of Members take part.

[Third Night.]

I very much doubt also the wisdom of commencing the sittings of the House as early as 2 o'clock. We have not yet got rid of the Private Bill Committees. We shall not get rid under any circumstances of Select Committees, indeed, the probability is that a larger number of Select Committees will sit in the future than in the past. Two o'clock is certainly too early an hour to commence the Business of the House. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite know the Ministerial difficulty in the way of a commencement being made at 2 o'clock. There is also the difficulty with reference to the occupation of many hon. Members. It would be a pity if this House was composed exclusively of any one class, either of the rich or poor, or of the leisured or the busy class. If you are to have the advantage of the assistance in the Business of the House of men of commercial experience, you cannot expect them to be down here so early as 2 o'clock. Could we not make the hour of meeting 3 o'clock and save the waste of time which now takes place—nearly half-an-hour—each day before the Public Business begins? Surely there could be an understanding that Public Business should begin directly Private Business closes. I also doubt the wisdom of the adjournment at the dinner hour. If an arbitrary time is fixed for the adjournment for dinner there will be a tendency to prolong Business until that hour, and there will be great difficulty in gathering up the threads of the debate at nine o'clock. There will be a great temptation to count the House, and generally we shall lose a great deal of valuable time. There is another point which ought to be taken into consideration, and that is that a very considerable number of Members commence to take part in the discussions of the House during the dinner hour. Many wise speeches are delivered in the dinner hour, speeches which tend to form and enlighten public opinion. There is difficulty, I know, in keeping a House during the dinner hour, but I think we should do much to economize time if, without any Rule, there was an understanding between the Speaker and the House that as near as possible, say to 8 o'clock, or to any other time the Speaker may fix, the Chair should suspend the sitting, and that the sitting should in every case be suspended for

a fixed period, say half-an-hour. At present, the time of the suspension is uncertain and its duration is uncertain. I think we might help to solve this dinner difficulty without proceeding to the extreme measure of suspending the sitting of the House; especially when that suspension is to be followed shortly afterwards by the automatic closure of the House at half-past 12 o'clock.* Mr. Speaker, I have endeavoured to make these suggestions in the spirit in which the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) has always received suggestions from this side. I am most anxious to support the Government in carrying out this scheme of reform. It ought not to be taken up as a Party question. However, we may differ amongst ourselves, we ought all to have a supreme and overpowering desire for the freedom and efficiency of the House of Commons. I hope all Members will support this Government, or any Government, in endeavouring to restore to the House of Commons the position it formerly held.

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY (Northamptonshire, S.): I do not believe that the present Leader of the House will be likely to abuse the privilege of asking the Speaker to set the closure in motion, but on some future occasion we may find an arrogant and unscrupulous Minister attempting to override the privileges of Members. The protection of the rights of minorities has been, and may again be, useful. I believe that if the Rules are agreed to without some change being made with regard to counts-out the rights of private Members will be prejudiced, as the House will generally be counted out at half-past 9, unless some matter of great importance is under consideration, on those days which are not allotted to Government Business.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Government has every reason to be satisfied with the course and tone of the debate. There is an evident desire in all quarters to facilitate the discussion of the proposed Rules, and to criticize them in such a way as to indicate an anxiety to assist the Government in laying down, and the House in adopting, such proposals as will effect the objects which the great majority of

Members desire to attain, which is that the Business of the House shall be facilitated with due regard to the privileges of minorities and of individuals. No speech has been more replete with friendly advice and suggestions worthy of consideration than that of the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler). The Government feel that it was a good augury for the future discussion of the details of the proposals as well as for the future conduct of Business generally, that Members have applied themselves to the discussion of the proposed Rules in a friendly spirit, and with an evident desire to forward, and not to impede, the Business of the House. I can assure the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton that the Government have no desire to force upon the House the New Rules in the exact form in which they are proposed; on the contrary, we would welcome the criticism of the House, and we would be glad if the Rules should be passed not by any Party majority, but by the general consent of the House, because then they would be much more likely to be effective than any Rules would be that were forced upon the House. As to the constitution of Grand Committees, no doubt there is a certain amount of inconvenience in giving them a special character, and there will be Bills as to which it would be doubtful to what Committee they ought to be referred. The Grand Committees have consisted largely of Gentlemen who have special knowledge of the subjects to be referred to them; and such special constitution of Grand Committees will hardly be possible unless it were understood that certain Bills are to be referred to certain Committees. The experiment made in referring the Bankruptcy Bill to a Grand Committee was a successful experiment; it got through its work in a businesslike manner. It did not consist wholly of mercantile men, but, as was necessary, it included a number of lawyers also. And it should be remembered that it was originally provided that 15 Members of the House might be added to a Grand Committee for a special purpose. I do not allude to these matters in any spirit of controversy, but simply to suggest that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman not to have specially constituted Committees might be attended with convenience as well as convenience.

It is well worthy of consideration whether the time for non-contentious Business should be increased, but much time would in any case be gained if the principle of devolution were carried out to any considerable extent. The question of hours must be taken as a whole, the question of meeting early being coupled with the question of rising early. If Ministers got to bed earlier they could attend to their Office duties earlier. The Government are not wedded to 2 o'clock as the hour of meeting, but will accept the general opinion of the House on the subject, and whether it were made 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock, I believe that both official Members and private Members engaged in business will find themselves able to adopt it if we are able to rise early and secure the rest which all alike require. On the question of closing the debate, the Government place themselves and the House in the hands of the Speaker. When the question was discussed in 1882 the Speaker was asked what he understood by the "evident sense of the House," and he said he should interpret it to mean the "evident sense of the House at large." This was what the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian called a matter of fact. It is quite evident the Speaker is not in a position to fulfil any such obligation as was laid down by Mr. Speaker Brand when he spoke of the "evident sense of the House at large." With Members scattered about the House it is impossible for him to say what is the opinion of the House at large. The only means by which this can be determined is a Division. The Speaker is now asked to decide a question of fact before he can put the machinery in motion to ascertain it. The proposed Rules will place him in a very much better position. The Speaker's only duties are to see that the rights of the minority are respected and that no frivolous Motions are put to the House with a view of putting an end to the debate. The power given to the Speaker will be adequate to effect both these objects. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) asked the Government if the House met at 2 o'clock what was to become of the Committees? So far as the Committees on Private Business are concerned, the Government intend to make proposals to relieve the House

from the burden which rests upon it with reference to Private Bill Committees. With regard to Select Committees, the fact of the House rising at an earlier hour at night will enable the Committees to commence their business at an earlier hour—say at 11 instead of 12 o'clock. Something has been said with reference to the position of private Members, and a suggestion was made that Bills originating with private Members should be referred to a Committee of Selection. I think the duty proposed to be imposed on that Committee would be a difficult if not an invidious one. It would be for them to judge between the merits of one measure and another, and I think that would not be satisfactory to the House. The position of private Members will be infinitely improved by the proposed Rules. At present those Members who are most fortunate in the ballot at the beginning of the Session are, when the first stage of the Bill is passed, often no better off than other less fortunate Members, because the ballot applies only to the first stage. Private Bills, even after having passed a second reading, unless they commend themselves to the almost unanimous approval of the House, have little chance of becoming law. The proposals of the Government are a distinct advantage and it will be for the House to say whether priority should be given to the Bills most advanced. I have referred to the criticisms made upon the proposals of the Government, and I will only say one word as to the attitude of the Conservative Party. So far as we are concerned, there is no change of feeling with respect to this matter. We are just as unwilling as ever to fetter the freedom of debate in the House of Commons; but this question has been decided in 1882, and I think we are in no way inconsistent in endeavouring to make effective the Rules which were passed for the purpose of shortening discussion on the Business of the House. It is a choice of evils—a question of whether the House should in some way or other limit the power of debate, or whether we should acknowledge that we are incapable to do the work we were sent there to perform. We do not like to interfere with the freedom of debate, but we consider this other evil of so supreme a character that we have no longer any choice in the matter. I can conceive

nothing more unfortunate than that the people of this country should think Parliament incapable of carrying out the mandates of the constituencies or removing the grievances of which the people complain. The Government will do everything they can to promote the wishes of the House of Commons; they are anxious to carry the House with them, and will seriously consider any suggestions made to them by any Member of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Mr. Speaker, we now approach the end of February, and we have before us the very difficult task of altering our mode of Procedure. I think it will be universally admitted that nothing less than an overwhelming necessity would have justified any Government, in the face of a Session which is very likely to be unusual in the character of the measures to be brought forward, in bringing before us so soon after the recent change such proposals as the Government have laid on the Table. I confess to having had some anxiety during the last three days to ascertain what were really the leading views in the minds of the Government as to the changes proposed. It may be necessary, in the altered circumstances of the time, that we should have a change in the method of enforcing the closure; but I think that in the opinion of any experienced Member of this House that is not the way in which the time of this House will be saved; but that it is by extending the system of devolution of Business on a very much larger scale than has hitherto been tried. I am obliged to confess, from the hesitating and apologetic way in which the Government have dealt with the question of devolution, that it is obvious that their main concern is to alter the system of closure, and make it more severe than it is at present. If I were in any doubt upon that one point, the fervour of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) would have removed any hesitation of mind. Towards the close of his speech the right hon. Gentleman turned aside to a certain section of this House, and gave the plainest intimation that what he was anxious for was a more effective gag, in order to control a certain minority. Not only have we that testimony of the right hon. Gentleman, but the Prime Minister,

in a speech which has appeared in *The Times* and other papers, has indicated in the plainest manner what the Government intend by stopping the ordinary Business of the House and throwing upon the floor proposals for an entire change in the mode of Procedure. And that is that, having been foiled in its control of Irish Business, it means, by force, to bring about a different state of things. I venture to say that the Government may find that their calculations in this respect have been altogether erroneous. There is no doubt that what is known as the Irish Party has in the past tried the temper of this Assembly, and done many things to militate strongly against the smooth working of our Parliamentary machine. But it has been evident during the last 12 months that a great change has come over the tactics of the Irish people and their Representatives in this House. To them a new prospect has opened; and they now have reason to hope that whatever demands they may make will be listened to by Parliament, and will be Constitutionally redressed. I myself should be very much surprised if it becomes necessary during this Session to apply the *clôture* on account of any difficulty in the Irish quarter of the House. If that be so, it is quite clear that the valuable time of this House is being wasted, and that we might at this moment be proceeding with the measures which the Government propose to lay before Parliament. No doubt, if the House is to do the work which the Empire demands at its hands, there must be very important changes made in our method of conducting the Business of the House, and beneficial changes can only, in my opinion, be found in the process of devolution. Few Members would wish to reproach gratuitously the Conservative Party for a change of front; but we have had satisfactory assurances from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie), and also from the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), that the Government will be prepared, when we come to discuss the Rules *seriatim*, to take counsel with the House generally, and seek to ascertain what is the general feeling of the House. The Government will act wisely in adopting such a course. I believe that, as time goes on, it would be found infinitely wiser for us that the Speaker should be excluded from the

partizanship which it is sought to throw on him. Up to the present, happily, there have been few occasions when the Speaker's interference has been necessary; but if, in the future, the *clôture*, in its less obnoxious form, is to be applied, the responsibility, it appears to me, will be able to rest with the House generally, and there will be freedom to any individual to take on himself the unwelcome task. The time of this House is of infinite value; and we have had many Members of experience—my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John R. Mowbray), for instance—expressing grave doubt as to whether we are likely to derive much benefit, so far as saving time is concerned, from some of the suggested changes. I am strongly of the same opinion. I doubt whether the proposed closure, or any other that can be projected, will have very much effect. The time of the House may be saved; but the great object, I take it, is to expedite the Business of the House, without entering into slipshod legislation. Ample time should be given to every section of the House; and, from that point of view, I regret that we should have before us a proposal for dealing with Standing Committees without enlarging those Committees, or enlarging their powers. On the other hand, now that we are engaged upon these important and permanent changes in our Procedure, I think that all sides of the House should be invited to take a share in the responsibility for what is being done. We should endeavour to frame such new Rules as will be acceptable to the House at large. I would remind the Conservative Party that it has not been their lot, nor can it be in the very nature of things, the lot of a Party who do not usually desire progress, that they should be, as a rule, in Office and power. It is to their advantage, therefore, as much as to that of any section of the House, that absolute freedom of discussion should be left to individual Members and Parties in this House. I would remind right hon. Gentlemen opposite that, in all probability, this discussion will run through a long period, and that on them will rest the responsibility if, towards the end of the Session, general embarrassment ensues from this interference with the ordinary work of the House.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I do not, for one moment, suppose that the ideas of one who has had so little experience as myself of Parliamentary Procedure will be of much value; therefore, I do not intend to offer many remarks; but there is one point touched by these new Rules on which even new Members may be allowed to feel very strongly, and that is our feeling of respect and submission to the Chair. Anything which suggests to our minds a fear that in the future, however remote and uncertain, differences of opinion on this point might be awakened, necessarily creates much uneasiness. Now, Sir, in my limited experience in this House, and so far as I have read anything concerning its history—especially its modern history—it does appear to me that there has always been a very strong and clearly-marked distinction drawn between matters of Rule and the Law of the House on the one hand, and matters of policy or expediency on the other. The occupant of the Chair has always been looked up to as the impersonation and embodiment of the best traditions and regulations of the House. The decisions of the Chair have always very properly been unanimously accepted at once. When the Chair has given a decision, it has always been recognized that it was not merely an individual that was speaking, but the whole House as a corporate body. But, Sir, if we introduce another element—that of policy or expediency—at once a very grave danger arises, because it is precisely on points of policy and expediency that the House differs within itself, and must always differ within itself. Therefore, a decision given on a point of policy or expediency must needs be, not the utterance of the whole House, but only the utterance of a part—that is to say, in fact, a Party decision. Now, it has been said that whatever danger might be incurred in this direction has already been incurred by the present form of the Closure Rule; but we have had it argued on very high authority that the present form of the Closure Rule only requires the Chair to decide upon a matter of fact concerning which there may be differences of opinion without the slightest disrespect to the Chair. We have been assured that the Chair was not required to decide upon any matter of policy. I myself am inclined to think that the present form of closure is

defective in this respect—that it may occasionally involve decisions from the Chair upon what ought to be considered points of policy or expediency; and I should like to see the present Rule as to closure improved by putting out of it altogether any appeal to the Chair on such points. But under the New Rules the Chair is brought in again, as I think, in a more dangerous manner, for it is called on to decide whether the proposer of the closure is acting rightly and fairly—is taking the right line of policy—in desiring to close a debate; and on such a point a large part of the House will necessarily differ from the proposal of the closure, and if a large part of the House differs on that point from the proposer, it will also differ from the Speaker, and that on a point of policy or expediency. Now, I do not think that this can happen without feelings being engendered which none of us would like to entertain for one moment towards the Chair of this House. Besides, in the new Procedure Rules, not only is the closure virtually to be decided on the decision of the Speaker, but in regard to the possibility of moving the adjournment of the House at or after Question time, again the Speaker is to be appealed to. Now, in such a case the Speaker may be appealed to twice. First, he is asked whether he will permit the adjournment of the House to be moved, and then, if any Member of the House thinks that this question has been discussed long enough, he asks the Speaker to decide whether the closure may be proposed or not; so that the Chair is brought in both at the beginning and at the end of such debate. If hon. Gentlemen will conceive to themselves any great, pressing, and possibly irritating public question arising on which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House were desired, I think they will acknowledge that in such a case there would be a danger of creating between some section of the House and the Chair feelings of which we ought never, I think, to run the risk. I do, therefore, hope that the Government will give a little more consideration to this point. As I have said, I do not speak as having any experience that makes my observations hardly worthy of any attention at all; but as a Member, perhaps, of in some respects an extreme

Party, I desire to say that, so far as I am aware, every Party desires to maintain unbroken the long tradition of absolute submission and respect to the Chair which has made the proceedings in this House in former times a model to the Legislatures of the whole world; and I do beseech the Government not carelessly to introduce any element whatever which could possibly endanger a break in that tradition.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory): I was prompted to take part in this discussion by an observation of an hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench, who said the Government were anxious that this matter should not be discussed entirely by the Front Benches, but should be discussed by Members at large. I am a new Member of the House, and I should not venture to take part in the discussion at all, but that I have listened with a great deal of attention to the debates which have been taking place in this House with a view to understand the Rules and Orders of the House. When I entered the House I entered it with the determination that, come what might, I would always endeavour, as far as I possibly could and as far as I understood them, to conform to the Rules of the House. Before, however, I say anything upon the Rules, I would make one observation with respect to the remark of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). The right hon. Gentleman said that though our observations grated on hon. Gentlemen opposite, in the same way as he had no doubt their observations grated upon us, we were always listened to by hon. Gentlemen opposite with respect. Now, I desire to give that statement my emphatic contradiction. I do not think even hon. Gentlemen opposite themselves will say that they listened with a great deal of respect to remarks which were made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) the other night, and I myself have had reason to complain of great discourtesy on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite, when I was trying, in Committee of the Whole House last Session, to set forth the case of a number of unfortunate prisoners in Ireland. I believe if those prisoners had been in England, and I had been an English Member, I should have been treated with a great deal more

courtesy and consideration by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, in a former Session, we, the Irish Party, had opposed all Business in this House. No; I do not think that is strictly accurate; I do not think the remark is strictly maintainable. It is quite possible that opposition may have been offered to certain measures before the present Irish Party was constituted in 1880; but since that time I maintain that the opposition on the part of the Irish Members has been mainly to matters which concern the freedom and the rights of their country, and that they have not obstructed English Business to any considerable extent. I say, Sir, that the real Obstructionists in the Parliament of 1880 were hon. Gentlemen opposite. They obstructed the Bill for the Extension of the Franchise; they brought forward a number of Motions of an obstructive character, as I thought, in reference to Egypt; they made very long and, as I think, often very meaningless speeches, and this was in the direction of Obstruction; and now they come and complain about us, and speak of us as if we were the only Obstructionists in this House. The truth is that Obstruction came largely from the other side, and hon. Gentlemen opposite, and right hon. Gentlemen too, seem to me to have a very peculiar memory. They recollect things which it is convenient for them to recollect, and they forget things which they desire no longer to remember. They seem to me to resemble very much a character in *The New Republic*. A lady is there introduced who is described as the London Sappho. A service was improvised on a particular occasion and Prayer Books were handed round, and the lady remarked that it was a long time since she had had a Prayer Book—that she did not think she had had one since she was confirmed. A gentleman remarked—"When you were married, perhaps?" "Oh!" she said; "possibly, but I have forgotten all about that." It seems to me that hon. Gentlemen opposite are just like that lady. They remember what they like to remember, and forget what it is inconvenient to remember. The question we have to ask ourselves with regard to the Rules is, I think, whether hon. Gentlemen opposite, in bringing forward these Rules, have a sincere desire to assist the

progress of Business? Now, I venture to entertain considerable doubt on that point, and I will tell the House why I doubt it. If right hon. Gentlemen opposite really desired to facilitate the Business of the House by these Rules, they would have put in the forefront those Resolutions about which there would be likely to be general agreement, leaving for later consideration the question of the closure, respecting which there must be a great deal of difference of opinion. They have, however, adopted exactly opposite tactics. There is one Rule about which we are all anxious—namely, that diminishing the time of our Sittings. That has not been put in the forefront of the Resolutions; but this Resolution regarding the *clôture* has. In the same way, there is a proposition for facilitating the passing of measures after *Whitsunside*, by giving priority to those which are far advanced. That is not a contentious matter at all, so far as I can see. It is a proposal in favour of which there will be a preponderance of opinion. Why, then, was it not put forward first? We have had no opportunity of discussing it given us. And why have the Government not given us a proof of their earnestness by dealing with the less contentious matters? Why is this question of the *clôture* pressed forward at the present moment? I believe the only reason why it is pressed forward is because right hon. Gentlemen opposite want to pass a Coercion Bill for Ireland. Do right hon. Gentlemen suppose that we want to prevent them from bringing on their Estimates? Why, the sooner we are through the Estimates the sooner we shall understand all about these extravagant proposals of theirs, and the better it will be for us the worse it will be for them. Do they suppose we want to prevent them bringing forward, and having discussed, their proposals for Local Government in England, knowing, as we do, that these proposals, when they are brought forward, now that the Government have lost the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), will be found miserably inadequate, and that it will, therefore, be to our interest to have these subjects brought forward as soon as possible? No, Sir; the only proposal which they are afraid they will not easily get is for what is euphemistically

called the strengthening of criminal procedure in Ireland. We seem to be, at the present moment, in a kind of transition state as regards the authority of the Chair. We seem to be midway between the time when the voice of the Chair was scarcely heard at all, and the period when his voice will be repeatedly heard, and when his interposition will be repeatedly called for. I am most anxious that the authority and dignity of the Chair should be preserved—I am most anxious that we should always retain, and have reason to retain, respect for the Chair. I want to regard the Chair as the bulwark of the rights of minorities in this House; and while I would not for one moment think of questioning any ruling which the Chair might make, I think it reasonable for us to know when the more frequent interpositions of the Chair in recent periods have been to the interest of the country, and have led to increased respect being entertained for the Chair? I venture to think that it will be found that this has not been the case. The first great innovation was when Mr. Speaker Brand stopped a debate in this House acting entirely on his own Motion, and without those Rules with which you, Sir, have since been furnished. Well, I think that the effects of that have been most disastrous on the subsequent condition of Ireland. I believe that the misery and even assassinations which occurred in that country were indirectly due to the facility which was then given for the passing through, in this House, of a Bill which pressed hardly on the people of Ireland. During the present Session we have had certain decisions which I do not say have shaken the confidence—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is dealing very discursively with this Rule. He is not entitled to pursue the line of argument he has commenced.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD: Then, Mr. Speaker, I will now go on to consider the exact proposal of the Rule. This principle of closure proposed is to introduce the Speaker; but to introduce him in a different form from the way he is at present introduced—namely, to bring him in second, as it were, while any Member of the House may come in first. I think that before the House consents to this proposal we ought to have very clearly before us one point—

namely, whether the consent of the Chair, which, according to the proposal, is requisite before any Member can move that the debate should cease, shall be given openly in the House—whether the request shall be made openly in the House, and the consent given in the same way, or whether it shall be by private arrangement. There is a great danger here. If you do this thing by means of private arrangement, you will produce a feeling of dissatisfaction amongst a large section of Members in this House; but if the Chair is asked to give its consent publicly and openly, there will be an opportunity given to the House of seeing that the Chair protects the rights of minorities, and this will greatly strengthen the Chair in the estimation of Members. Then a question arises with regard to Members. I was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) declare that he would like the *clôture* to be applied by a majority pure and simple. He gave as his reason that in this House we make laws by means of majorities pure and simple, and he asked why we should not also impose this restraint on ourselves in that way? But, Sir, it is not the case that we make laws by means of majorities pure and simple. Surely that was a most inadequate statement of the facts. Suppose a Bill were to pass a second reading in this House by a majority of three, and it was a Bill about which there was very strong Party feeling. Does anybody really suppose that that Bill would become law? Does anyone suppose that that one Division would settle the matter? Why the measure would be thrown out in Committee or on Report, or on Third Reading; therefore, it is not accurate to say that it is by majority pure and simple that we settle the most important questions. But we have had a proposal from the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Courtney) that we should have a proportion introduced. Now, I conceive that to introduce that would be to press very hardly upon the minority in this House, and I conceive that even the proposal as it stands would be fairer to minorities than any system of proportion. In fact, the hon. Gentleman seems to me to have got the subject of proportion rather on the brain, and I never expect to hear a

speech from him in which proportion—proportional representation, or proportion in regard to these Rules—will not come out. I am entitled to ask, in conclusion, what will be the probable effect of these Rules, supposing you pass them? It is conceivable that they may produce no effect at all. You have been warned already that it is possible to drive a coach and six through the most important Rules if men are only disposed to do so. But they may have some limited effect. If they have, it is surely worth the while of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and of the House, to consider whether that limited effect is really worth the sacrifice of time and temper which the passing of these Rules will involve. It is conceivable, though I do not suppose even right hon. Gentlemen opposite think it at all likely, that these Rules may have the effect and object those who propose them have in view, and that all difficulties in the way of carrying on the Business of the House may be removed. Irish Members may be gagged, and it may be impossible to bring forward Irish grievances in this House; but if it is, other platforms are open to us, not only in Ireland but in England, from one end of the country to the other; and I am by no means sure that the best thing that could happen to us very shortly would not be that we should be excluded altogether from the proceedings of this House, so that we shall have an opportunity of devoting our whole time to the enlightenment of public opinion in England on the Irish Question, which is going on rapidly, and which hon. Gentlemen opposite are powerless to prevent.

MR. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow): The hon. Member who has just sat down asked what is the object of the proposed New Rules, and I do not think there is much difficulty in answering his question. I think all who have any regard for themselves as Members of this House, as a House of Business capable of managing the affairs of the country, feel an interest in the House having restored to itself the power of managing those affairs. There is a general feeling throughout the country that the House has been paralyzed and rendered incapable of performing its Business, and that some such Rules as these are absolutely necessary if any Business whatever is to be trans-

acted. We sit here Session after Session, and matters in which our constituents are deeply interested are left unattended to. Well, the opposition to the New Rules—especially to the first—seems to proceed from two Parties. We have Gentlemen on this side, no doubt the most experienced of Members, having sat in this House for upwards of 30 years, for whose opinions we are bound to have the highest possible regard, who seem to have an almost superstitious regard for the rights of minorities. I have heard a great deal said about the danger of closing debates by a mere majority, even with the assent of the Speaker. Well, I wish we could do without this power of *clôture*. I should be very glad indeed if we could proceed, as in times past, when there was a consciousness on the part of Members of this House that there was something due to the House when the debate had been sufficiently exhausted. I could wish that there was such a feeling as that pervading the House at the present time; but it is quite clear that that is not so, and I think we may push the superstition of the older Members of the House as to the rights of minorities a great deal too far. I think the majority has its rights. I think it is very hard upon men who are in the majority in this House that they should be bound to sit here night after night listening to speeches that are merely repetitions of speeches already made, and that we should be called upon, as we were last September, to come down to the House, night after night, to hear all sorts of small matters raked up affecting contracts, rights of trial, imprisonment of certain people—matters the discussion of which, if they affected English transactions, would not be tolerated for a moment. I say it is very hard on the majority, who want to get through the Business of the House, that they should be obliged to sit here continually powerless whilst some of the idlest talk which it has ever been my lot to listen to is proceeding. We must have regard to the demand of the country that the Business of the country shall be conducted with something like reasonable despatch. Then it is said there is a desire to gag a certain section of the House, and the hon. Gentleman who last spoke rather threatened us with this—that if the Irish Members are not allowed to ventilate their grievances in this House

other platforms would be found. Far be it from me, or any other Member of this House, to endeavour to gag any section, or prevent them from ventilating any real grievance. Let them ventilate their grievances here. This is the proper place; but our point is that these grievances should be ventilated fairly, and that when the case in respect of any particular grievance has been put before the House the debate should be closed, and a Division taken, so that the opinion of the House may be given and other matters may be brought forward, so that grievances from other parts of the Empire may be dealt with. The hon. Member says the remedy of his Party is to go to other platforms, and, in saying that, he has answered one of the arguments urged against the proposed *Clôture* Rule. It is said this Rule will be a most dangerous thing, and that it may be exercised by the majority harshly, and for the purpose of silencing real debate. Can it? The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has given the answer to that. There are other platforms; and when the majority, with the assistance of the Speaker, attempts to exercise the power of closure, the answer is—"There are platforms outside, on which an unfair attempt may be denounced." You may depend upon it that any attempt to put the *clôture* into operation unfairly will bring upon those who are responsible a just reward in the condemnation of the general public. As to making the Speaker a party to this proceeding, it must always happen to the President of any Assembly that, at some time or other, he will have to give his opinion in favour of one side or the other. A Judge in a Court of Justice cannot avoid giving a decision in favour of one side or the other; and the answer to that argument is that we select for the Office of the Chair a Gentleman in whose honour and integrity we have entire confidence, and whom we have reason to believe will guard the rights of the minority and will take care that, before he allows the *clôture* to be put into operation, the matter in hand shall have been fairly and sufficiently discussed. If we cannot entrust a Gentleman with a power like that he would soon cease to be Speaker. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) and several others have suggested that the New Rules do

not recognize sufficiently the principle of devolution. I understand now that we are only discussing the Rules in general, and, if a certain Rule is not necessary, it will be competent for us to give effect to any Amendment that may be necessary for the purpose of extending the principle of devolution; but I cannot myself see why we are not to have increased time given to us for the purpose of transacting necessary Business. I do not see the slightest difficulty in the way of extending the principle of devolution, and why the House should not have increased time and vigour given to it in that way.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I desire to add a very few words to this discussion. It is, I think, the evident sense of the House that the Rules of Procedure as proposed by the Government will pass with very few Amendments. I trust no Members of the House will have reason to regret the alacrity with which they seem to acquiesce in the proposals of the Government. I have no doubt that if these Rules be passed that, in a short time, you will have very little reason to put them in operation. They will become a dead letter, because the abnormal state of things that has demanded them will have ceased to exist. Unquestionably, these Rules have been proposed in order to deal with what has been termed "Irish Obstruction." But, Sir, that Obstruction was described by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) as "the safety valve for Irish rebellion." I think that if the spirit of Irish rebellion has escaped in this House in Obstruction, this House and the nation have had ample compensation for the time they have lost owing to that Obstruction. I trust that when a re-adjustment of the condition of things that exists between the two nations will have taken place, and the abnormal state of things that has demanded these Rules has ceased to exist, the Rules will become a dead letter, and the House will resume its old efficiency without any necessity for putting them into operation. Now, Sir, many things have been said within the last few days in reference to the matter of the *clôture*. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire said that when he entered this House—

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood further adjourned till To-morrow.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 24th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—*Law of Evidence Amendment** (23); *Justices' Jurisdiction** (24).
PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*First Reading*—*Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)** (29); *Local Government (Ireland) (Carrick-on-Suir)** (30).

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No 23.)

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD BRAMWELL, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the best reason he could give their Lordships for agreeing to his Motion was that their Lordships had already passed a similar measure, but which was not heard of again after it was sent to the other House. The object of the present measure was to remove the last piece of the old Law of Evidence, and to enable persons charged with crime, and the husbands and wives respectively of those so charged, to give evidence on their trial or inquiry. The Bill was not compulsory; no person could be called under it against his or her inclination to give evidence, and it would be entirely at the option of the prisoner whether he was called as a witness or not. Any person giving evidence would have to submit himself to cross-examination. He doubted very much whether prisoners as a class would be benefited by the Bill. It would be to the advantage of innocent persons; but it was very likely that the measure would do some harm to those who were not innocent, to which, he trusted, their Lordships had no objection. There was a notion that a prisoner had a right to make a statement without being sworn; but he very

much questioned whether he had the privilege; he had never heard of it until very recently. The practice, no doubt, had crept in; but any statement by a prisoner in such circumstances was comparatively worthless for the reason that it was not made on oath, and, what was even more important, was not subject to cross-examination. He hoped their Lordships would pass the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(*The Lord Bramwell*.)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, it had been his opinion for a great number of years that an alteration of the law, as recommended by the noble and learned Lord, should undoubtedly be made. He might date back his firm conviction on the subject to a case in which he was engaged many years ago as counsel. It was a civil action, brought against the agents and a number of the directors of a commercial company, who were charged with conspiracy to defraud, and each of the persons charged was called as a witness, and was thus able to give an explanation. Now, he had no doubt whatever that if those who brought forward that action had thought it right to indict the persons charged, instead of bringing the case forward as a civil action, every one of them must have been convicted in the absence of the explanation which they were able to give when called. That was only one of a number of cases which had come under his notice. The noble and learned Lord had recommended the Bill on the ground that it was not compulsory; but while it might not be so in terms he thought it was compulsory in effect. If they made it competent for persons to be called, and they were not called, the inevitable conclusion, the irresistible force of logic, would be that they were not called because they would be obliged to admit their guilt. He entirely approved the object of the Bill; but he did not think it right that their Lordships should adopt it without fully understanding that it forced upon accused persons the necessity of making explanations on their trials.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS (Lord ESHER) said, he did not like the Bill, either with or without the 5th clause. Without it, no one would look at the Bill. With it, the Bill was an unjust

anomaly. The 5th clause provided that a prisoner, if called, should not be cross-examined as to his previous life, whether he had been convicted, and so on, with the view of testing his credibility. They might thus have this extraordinary condition of affairs—that while the prosecutor and his witnesses might have to answer questions as to their past history, the prisoner's story, without such testing, was to have equal value, although the accused, from the number of convictions—it might be for perjury—was, in truth, a witness whose testimony was wholly unworthy of belief. The 5th clause showed that the promoters of the Bill dared not face its consequences.

LORD DENMAN said, he was opposed to the Bill, as it was sure to cause a great waste of time. A fee would have to be paid for the administering of every oath, and this would be a loss to a defendant. The Lord President of the Council had objected to oaths on examinations before magistrates last year. At present a prisoner or defendant stated his case, and it was not more trustworthy on oath, and he would not by an oath escape justice. Sir Charles Dilke was not believed on his oath. O'Donnell made a statement, but was convicted. A man of the same name had worked for him (Lord Denman), and was asked if he were related to the man whom Mr. Justice Denman—his (Lord Denman's) brother—had hanged. The answer was, "He was my cousin." He (Lord Denman) said if his statement had been on oath it would not have saved him. He said Carey fired the first shot. He inquired of the convict's counsel if he thought an oath would have saved him. He wrote, "He did not think it would." He also asked the Hon. Mr. Justice Denman, and he wrote that O'Donnell's saying when he saw the likeness of Carey "I will shoot him," caused his conviction. He (Lord Denman) told the cousin that a statement not confirmed would not save, and that no man can take the law into his own hands. As to cases of divorce and interested witnesses, it ought to be left to the Presiding Judge to decide if it were necessary to call such evidence or to dispense with it.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, that he entirely agreed with what had been said by his noble and learned Friend the Master of the Rolls (Lord Esher) as to the inexpediency of passing

the Bill. The Bill would be really compulsory, although it was nominally not so. It would, he feared, prove a great incentive to perjury. The penalties which were supposed to attach to the commission of perjury had become practically inoperative, as no prosecutions were ever instituted. The verdicts in divorce cases showed that parties were frequently guilty of perjury and subornation of perjury, and yet no prosecutions followed these verdicts. The result of permitting co-respondents to give evidence in the Divorce Court was not an encouraging precedent for legislation of this kind. Did anyone really suppose that a jury would attach greater weight to the statement of a prisoner because it was made on oath? It was enough that he should have the opportunity of making a statement. He might mention that a Judge who had tried more than 3,000 prisoners had told him that he was opposed to the Bill, and believed that all that was necessary was that power should be given by statute to the prisoner to make any statement he pleased.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, he entirely differed from those who thought that a prisoner, in his statement, was always able to do full justice to his case. He could not agree that every statement by a prisoner always served him or did justice to his story. He believed an ignorant prisoner—and in the country there was a certain number of ignorant prisoners—had not the faintest idea of telling that story intelligibly; he would begin at the wrong end; he would argue with an imaginary enemy; and he could not tell his story in such a way that the jury could understand it. In such cases, when acting as Chairman of Quarter Sessions, he had found that, without anticipating the proposed change in the law, the putting of a few questions to a prisoner in the way of examination or cross-examination—he knew he was extremely irregular in so doing—had the effect of assisting him to present his case in a way that was more satisfactory to the jury and the Court than leaving the matter where it was left by an unsifted and imperfect statement. He did not believe that without some such help a very ignorant prisoner could put his case properly.

Motion *agreed to*; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

JUSTICES' JURISDICTION BILL.

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

(NO. 24.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD BRAMWELL, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it had already been twice passed by their Lordships' House. Its object was to extend the jurisdiction of the Court of Quarter Sessions in cases of burglary. Undoubtedly, there were many cases of burglary for which the offender deserved to be sentenced to penal servitude for life—cases in which housebreaking instruments and weapons such as firearms were used. Such cases ought to be tried by Judges of Assize. The offence of burglary was technically committed in most trifling cases. Burglary consisted in either breaking into or breaking out of a house between 9 p.m. and 6 o'clock a.m.; and the offence was committed if a man walked out of a lodging-house with another lodger's coat, simply opening the door, or if he put his hand through a pantry window and stole a piece of bacon. There were many cases of burglary sent to Assizes which might be more properly tried at the Quarter Sessions; for, as they knew, a man might be kept in prison a longer time awaiting his trial at Assize than he might be if tried by a Court of Quarter Session. It was impossible to lay down any rule, or to make any statement, which would define a case of trifling burglary. The language used in the Bill included all cases, but gave an option to the committing magistrate, who, instead of being bound, as he now was, to send all burglars for trial at Assizes, might, if he thought them proper cases, send them to the Court of Quarter Session. Though it included all cases, the Bill contained words which would sufficiently indicate to any magistrate, mindful of his duty and endowed with common sense, that he was not to send grave cases to the Quarter Sessions. He denied that magistrates in Quarter Session were unfit to try such cases as were proposed. Magistrates at present tried cases of housebreaking, and to say that they were incapable of trying trifling

burglaries was to say that they were not capable of trying at what o'clock the offence was committed. He asked their Lordships to pass the Bill, with a view to benefit prisoners who otherwise might be detained longer than they would be if tried at Quarter Sessions, and in order to save the waste of time of Judges in trying trumpery cases.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS (Lord ESHER) said, he had the misfortune to differ from the noble and learned Lord. He thought that before passing the Bill they ought, at least, to have some proof that magistrates in Quarter Session were willing to undertake the heavy responsibility thrown upon them. The enactment of the Bill was that any case of burglary might be tried before a Court of Quarter Session, so that cases of the gravest kind might be tried before this Court—cases the punishment for which was penal servitude for life. It was not fair to put upon local magistrates so great a responsibility as such cases might involve. The recital that the Bill was to be applied only in trifling cases had no effect upon the enactment. And, further, a trifling case in itself might be the offence of a man who had been previously convicted, and the responsibility for whose punishment ought not to be placed upon magistrates. He also wished to point out that while in the title of the Bill it was stated that the committing magistrate was to have a discretionary power in sending cases of burglary to the Quarter Sessions or Assizes, in the Bill itself, which was really all that should be looked at, nothing at all was said as to there being any option in the matter. The Bill was not wanted. The number of cases of small burglaries, as they were called, did not, on the average, exceed five at an Assize.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he agreed with a great deal of what had been said on both sides. He thought it would be well to read the Bill a second time; but it would also be reasonable to wait and see whether some Amendment could not be made in the Bill. Mere trifling cases of burglary ought not to occupy the attention of Judges of Assize, blocking the way of more important business. Some improvement might be made whereby the Public Prosecutor or some proper person might intervene before a case was committed to

the Quarter Sessions, and see that there was no objection to the course taken. There were serious offences, such as wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, which magistrates now practically decided should or should not be tried at Assizes. But even these did not depend absolutely upon the discretion of the magistrates. The Grand Jury had a right to intervene, and if they had before them what they considered an important and serious case they could return whatever Bill they liked, and it was quite within his experience that a Grand Jury had demanded to have before them an indictment for a graver offence than the one submitted in the first instance. He thought that some mode might be found, not of defining what was a little burglary—for he had tried to do that and had failed—but of providing some security against the evil suggested and preventing any danger from the rash or foolish action of a magistrate.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK) suggested that a way out of the difficulty would be found in allowing magistrates to treat small cases of burglary as cases of housebreaking.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (CARRICK-ON-SUIR) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the town of Carrick-on-Suir—Was presented by The Lord Privy Seal; read 1^a. (No. 30.)

House adjourned at a quarter past
Five o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 24th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies.
PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment* [180].
Second Reading—Colonial Service (Pensions)* [158].
Second Reading—*Referred to Select Committee*—Foynes Harbour (Transfer)* [159].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—n—

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY AND
FELIXSTOWE RAILWAY AND DOCK
COMPANIES BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
“That the Bill be now read a second
time.”—(*Lord Claud Hamilton*.)

MR. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): It will be remembered by the House that on two previous occasions a Bill was considered entitled the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midland Railway Bill. On those two occasions the House was good enough to affirm the principle that that Bill was entitled to go before a Committee upstairs. The present Bill, promoted by the Great Eastern Railway Company, proposes now to absorb that railway, and to put an end to the possibility of any other railway being constructed to serve the interests of the constituents whom I represent; so that the prospect of securing the making of a line through the heart of the division will become extremely remote. It is a division which, at the present moment, is extremely badly served in the shape of railway accommodation. Although it is 46 miles in length, it has no railway whatever except on its external borders; and I must say, in the interests of my constituents, that I feel alarmed at the idea of the injury that will ensue by this great unserved district being absorbed by the Felixstowe Railway, which in no sense whatever accommodates the district. If I may be allowed, in the interests of a large agricultural constituency and by a county which has only a poor and struggling manufacturing industry, to make some appeal for increased accommodation to the district, before a Bill is sanctioned which will for ever hereafter prevent them from having a claim on the consideration of the powerful Railway Company who are now bringing this Bill before the House, I know that I have no right to appeal to the House in favour of such a vague idea as that which I have pointed to on the ground that no covenant has been broken; but I do think, and I trust that many hon. Members will agree with me, that the great privileges granted to

railway companies entail upon them also a corresponding amount of duties. Therefore, I hope from the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool (Lord Claud Hamilton), whom I see in his place, to receive some assurance that if this Bill is permitted to pass unopposed, the reasonable wants of this large district, and the powerful consideration of the large amount of unemployed labour in the district entails on all who have the welfare of the agricultural population at heart—therefore, I hope we shall have some slight promise from him that the wants of this important district shall not remain for ever unconsidered, and that the question of the benefit of so large a number of people will be studied. Anything that may be done in this direction will tend materially to revive the struggling industries of the county and its drooping manufactures, instead of leaving them, by the action which this House may take on the present occasion, with out hope for the future. Therefore, I venture to make an appeal to the noble Lord in charge of the Bill to give some assurance that those interests which I believe will be prejudicially affected if the Bill is allowed to pass without some such assurance will be carefully guarded.

LORD CLAUD HAMILTON (Liverpool, West Derby): I have had the honour of a seat for many years in this House, and I am bound to say that the opposition to this Bill is based upon the most flimsy proposal it has ever been my lot to listen to in this House. The Bill in itself is one of an exceedingly simple character. It asks Parliament to affirm an agreement come to by the Great Eastern Railway Company, whom I have the honour to represent, on the one hand, and Colonel Tomline on the other, for the sale of a line of railway constructed by Colonel Tomline to the Great Eastern Railway Company. Now, what is the history of that line? In 1877 this line was projected by Colonel Tomline, and afterwards constructed by him. It was completed about the year 1879, and opened for traffic. Colonel Tomline, however, found that he was unable himself to work the line either for his own profit or for the advantage of the public, and he therefore asked the Great Eastern Railway Company to undertake the working of it on his behalf, which they did, and they have continued to do so with great advantage to the

public and to the development of the traffic of the district. Colonel Tomline now wishes to sell the line absolutely to the Great Eastern Railway Company, and the district through which the line passes is entirely in favour of that sale, subject to some small details which can only be settled by a Committee of this House. There is no opposition whatever on the part of the district to the Bill. My hon. Friend opposite comes forward, nevertheless, and says that if the Bill is sanctioned by the House of Commons and this line is sold to the Great Eastern Railway Company, some other line in a totally different part of the county which may be projected in some future day may never be made. Now, I say that the duty of the House of Commons is to consider a measure on its merits, and nobody can say a word against the principle or the details of the Bill we are now asked to read a second time. We are asked to reject this Bill because there may be some measure at the present moment entirely *in nubibus*, which may be projected in the future. Now, this House has already twice rejected this proposed railway. In 1875 it was projected in the interests of that portion of the country, and it fell through for want of funds. Last year it was projected, and was rejected on the Standing Orders. An hon. Member moved that it be re-committed, and be considered by a Committee upstairs. The Bill was re-committed, and was considered by a Committee of the House, of which the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) was Chairman. The promoters having been heard, and a mass of evidence taken from the inhabitants of the district through which it was intended to pass, and who are represented by my hon. Friend opposite, the Bill was rejected by the Committee on its merits. Therefore, I say that this Bill, which is intended to serve a different portion of the country altogether, which is approved of by the people of the district through which it will pass, is sought to be rejected in order that a proposal which has been twice brought forward and rejected on its merits should be adopted. That is not a proposition that ought to be considered for one moment by this House. If the landowners in that part of the

country or the inhabitants choose to bring forward a measure the country still exists for them to make their line, and the House of Commons will be ready to hear any proposal they may make on its own merits. But to say that this Bill should be rejected on such frivolous grounds as those which have been put forward by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Quilter) is an assertion which I am sure will not receive the assent of the House. I implore the House in the interests of this part of the country, and in accordance with all precedent, to pass the second reading of the Bill.

COLONEL ANSTRUTHER (Suffolk, Woodbridge): As the Member for the constituency through which this Felixstowe and Ipswich Line passes I desire to say a word, and I will only detain the House for a very few minutes in the interests of Felixstowe and the neighbourhood which is concerned in this railway. The line itself is only about nine miles in length. It was constructed by a public-spirited gentleman—Colonel Tomline—who found that he was unable to work it, and it has been worked ever since by the Great Eastern Railway Company. The prosperity of Felixstowe and the surrounding villages depends considerably on the through traffic over the main line; and there can be no doubt that if this short line of nine miles becomes part of the Great Eastern system the traffic arrangements with regard to Felixstowe and the district will be very much improved. Moreover, I fail to see how in any way whatever the purchase of this small line of railway can interfere with any line that may be projected from Cambridge to Ipswich, or Felixstowe, or any other part of the coast. Therefore, I have no hesitation in asking the House to assent to the second reading of this Bill.

Question put and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

AMBLESIDE RAILWAY BILL (*by Order*).

INSTRUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [21st February].

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed*.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I was so unfortunate as not to catch your eye, Sir, on the last occasion when this Bill was under consideration before the adjournment of the debate was moved. As far as the Instruction is concerned which is proposed by the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), I do not know that on its merits alone I should be very much disposed to oppose it. At the same time I consider that the Amendment proposed to the Instruction by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) is a good Amendment, and I shall support it if the hon. Member goes into the Lobby. I desire on general grounds to enter a protest against the manner in which the opposition to this Bill has been conducted, and especially against the precedent which this Instruction establishes. I cannot for the life of me see why the inhabitants of Westmoreland and Cumberland are to be always subjected to this annoyance whenever they wish to obtain the facilities which British subjects possess in other parts of the Kingdom whenever any scheme is brought forward for the improvement of the district in which they reside. More than that, I wish also to protest in the strongest manner against the effort which has been made on this occasion to prejudice this scheme in the eyes of the House. The hon. Member for Aberdeen complained very much of the action of hon. Members sitting on this side of the House. He actually made use of this expression, for I took down his words at the time—"This is not the way in which the Business of the House should be conducted." I think there is a great deal in this question which merits the sneer which the hon. Member addressed to the House. We have seen the way in which the opposition to the Bill has been conducted, and in my opinion it has not been in accordance with the Business arrangements of the House. When the Bill was read a second time there were persons in the Lobby engaged in distributing to Members a paper which I hold in my hand called "Reasons against the second reading of the Bill." I ventured the other day when the Bill was under consideration to go through those reasons very briefly, and to point out that substantially every one of the allegations down in this paper was false. I repeat that statement now. The right

hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) followed me, and he made use of these words, which I also took down at the time. He said that—

"He was fully prepared to maintain the truth of every word contained in the statement put forward by the Society for the Preservation of Commons,"

of which he is the Chairman. Now, all I can say is that the right hon. Gentleman cannot be personally acquainted with the facts of the case, or else he is incapable of understanding them. The third of the allegations contained in this paper is this—

"The support of the line is confined to a very few persons, most of whom have some private purpose to serve. The only promoter who is a landowner declines to pledge himself to become a shareholder. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood are, as a body, opposed to the line."

There is not a word of truth in that allegation. I pledge myself, standing here in my place in the House of Commons, to the fact that the vast majority of the inhabitants of West Cumberland are in favour of the Bill. The Press of West Cumberland is entirely in favour of the line.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): I rise to Order. I wish to know from you Sir, whether the right hon. Gentleman is addressing himself to the Instruction moved by the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce)?

MR. SPEAKER: The remarks of the right hon. Gentleman upon the Amendment seem to me to be perfectly applicable.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: I am really surprised that the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. James), who has been a Member of this House for so many years, should have such a very small acquaintance with the A B C of our Rules of Procedure. I was defending myself from the imputation brought against me by the right hon. Member for Bradford, who said he was prepared to maintain the truth of every one of these statements. I am very sorry to detain the House, but interruptions of this kind naturally tend to prolong the observations I intended to make. Well, Sir, the reasons against the second reading of the Bill put forward by the Commons Preservation Society, which I was reading, say that the support of the line is confined to a very few persons. Now, I maintain that the whole of West

Cumberland is in favour of the Bill. I hold in my hand a copy of *The West Cumberland Times* of last Saturday—a paper of very large circulation in West Cumberland. In an article upon the debate which occurred in this House the editor is good enough to approve of the course which I myself and my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Cumberland (Mr. J. W. Lowther) took, and also of that which was taken by the hon. Member for Northampton; and it goes on to say that we administered a merited rebuke to the so-called Lake District Defence Society, who appear to be “about as mendacious as they are meddlesome.” The House, however, has only to do with the action of Parliament. These reasons go on to say—

“The Lake District has hitherto been treated as a national pleasure ground—the one mountain district of England. Its peculiar beauty is of a kind which would be seriously impaired, if not ruined, by the intrusion of railway embankment and cutting; and Parliament has, hitherto, steadily refused to admit any line within the area.”

Now, Parliament has never done anything of the sort; but it has sanctioned railways in Westmoreland and Cumberland at various points. If it be any justification of the opposition I have felt it my duty to raise in regard to this document I may say that I hold in my hand a telegram received in reference to the Secretary of this particular Association. That telegram says—

“Hill has sent letter about Ambleside Committee on here, admitting errors in last statement, and endeavouring to excuse himself.”

I think that the inhabitants of the district are in themselves quite competent to judge whether this railway will be of advantage to the locality through which it passes or not, and that they shall be allowed to come to a decision upon their own local matters without interference from without. I may also say a word to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford upon the question of taste. If the question is to be raised I should say that the right hon. Gentleman is the very last man to interfere in such a matter, seeing that he is the author of the very worst piece of Vandalism which has been perpetrated in the present day—namely, the wilderness of Hyde Park Corner.

MR. T. FRY (Darlington): I have had a house within a few miles of Ambleside for several years, and I

should, therefore, like to say a word upon the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). All I can say is that I wish the railway had been made some seven or 10 years ago, because I believe it would have been of great advantage to a large number of persons who annually go to that district. It has been stated that the construction of this railway will destroy the beauty of the scenery. No doubt the district is one which is remarkable for the beauty of its scenery; but I do not see how the scenery of the proposed line differs from that between Kendal and Windermere, in regard to which Parliament has already allowed the construction of a railway. Parliament has also sanctioned a railway to Coniston, another to Keswick, and lines to two points upon Lake Windermere itself. There are many hon. Members in this House who know the district well, and I am sure that they will appreciate what I say when I mention that persons have often felt the disadvantage of being turned out at Windermere, in a pouring rain, when desiring to get further on in the district. For a large portion of the year the coach accommodation is of the smallest character, and during the three or four months which constitute the tourists' season the traffic is so great that the coaches are uncomfortably filled. I am quite certain, from what I know of Ambleside and the people there, that they are largely in favour of the construction of this railway, and that they are impressed with the importance of having it carried on as far as that town. Most of those who support the Bill are inhabitants of the district. It is opposed only by a few well-to-do residents; but I do not think that this House ought to consider the privileges of the few against the advantages of the many. I have great pleasure in supporting the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton.

MR. KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I trust the House will pardon me if I occupy its attention for a few minutes while I say a word or two upon the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). My hon. Colleague in the representation of Salford (Mr. Howorth) spoke last week against the second reading of the Bill, and I supported him by my vote, be-

lieving that in doing so I was acting in the interests of my constituents, who are, in the main, members of that body which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) calls the masses—"the intelligent masses." I believe that they will be much affected by the passing of this Bill, and I oppose the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton in their interest—not in the interest of the rich, but in that of the poor, or, at all events, in the interest of those who are not rich. I maintain that if this railway is sanctioned the Lake District will be cut up and seriously injured. The poor will not be able to admire the district and scenery as they have done hitherto, and, unlike the rich, they will not be able to afford expensive railway fares which may enable them to take long journeys to other and more beautiful localities. At the same time I feel some difficulty in speaking upon the Amendment, because I am bound to confine myself to what the right hon. Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) has called the A B C of our Rules of Procedure, and I am not allowed to touch incidentally on questions outside the scope of the Amendment. I maintain that the Committee to which the Bill will be referred ought to have complete evidence before it, not only from the neighbourhood, but also from persons outside the neighbourhood—what may be called non-local evidence. I admit that the interests of the tourists ought not to be considered before those of the inhabitants; but what I contend is that it is the interests of speculators that are now being considered before those of the community. Moreover, I maintain that those who live on the spot—those whom we may call the inhabitants of the Lake District—are not able to judge whether the scenery will be spoiled or not. My right hon. Friend the Member for Whitehaven has told the House that the great majority of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood are in favour of the construction of this line; but I say that they are not the best judges. I am also of opinion that outside evidence ought to be admitted, because it is a common practice to admit outside evidence in similar cases. So far as the speculators are concerned, I say that evidence is absolutely necessary in regard to what has taken place outside the Lake

District. What I think may happen is this. At the present moment the station at Windermere is a mile distant from the town of Bowness. [An hon. MEMBER: More than a mile.] It is proposed to carry on the Windermere line from Windermere to Ambleside, a distance of about six miles, and, perhaps, to Keswick. When the railway reaches Ambleside, it will be found that the town of Ambleside, being on the Lake, is on the same level as the town of Bowness; and the consequence will be that a proposal will soon be made for constructing a line between Ambleside and Bowness, on the edge of the Lake. [An hon. MEMBER: Why not?] My hon. Friend says "Why not?" and my answer is that we should then have a railway upon the Lake, and there could be nothing more hideous than to have the Lake of Windermere girt by iron rails. I have stated that those on the spot are unable to judge for themselves. If an illustration is wanted, let me refer the hon. Member for Northampton to the conversation which took place between the professor of philosophy and M. Jourdain, when M. Jourdain discovered that he had been talking prose for more than 40 years of his life, and did not know it. If we want a further illustration, let me refer to the senior Member for Northampton himself. He has repeatedly spoken in this House during the last fortnight, and probably he may entertain a favourable opinion of the effect of his speeches. Probably he does know the effect of them upon those who sit upon the Benches near him; but, as far as I can judge, he does not know the effect which has been produced by them upon hon. Gentlemen who sit on this side of the House. For a similar reason, people who live in a particular neighbourhood are unable to judge whether the scenery around them may be injured or not. It is for those who live outside the district to say whether or not the scenery will be spoiled under certain conditions. I know that the hon. Member for Northampton is fond of recurring to the wisdom of our ancestors, and this is a case in which I think we ought to recur to the wisdom of our ancestors. If we do that, the hon. Member will not support his own Amendment; but, on the contrary, he will vote for the original Instruction moved by the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce).

For these reasons I intend to vote against the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton, and I trust that many other hon. Members will follow me into the Division Lobby.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.) : I am glad to see such a strong consensus of opinion in regard to this question on the part of the Representatives of the great Northern cities, though sitting on different sides of the House. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Salford (Mr. Knowles), who has just spoken, told the House that he spoke on behalf of the toiling and intelligent masses. I also take this opportunity of speaking on their behalf. I quite agree with him that, in a question like this, this House is bound to constitute itself the custodian of the beautiful spots which are left in England. It would be most undesirable to allow the Lake District to be cut up and handed over to snorting railway engines, as other parts of England have been. A great outcry is made when a picture by Raffaele, or by Murillo, or by any of the great masters, is allowed to leave the country; but here we have a priceless gem, fresh from the hand of Nature, which we are asked to destroy for the benefit of a few local gentlemen who study only the advantage of their own pecuniary interests. I am of opinion that the House of Commons should never allow interests of that kind to outweigh the interests of the great mass of the inhabitants of Yorkshire and Lancashire. It is well known that the Lake District is the recruiting ground for the health of the labouring classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and of working men of all classes who are engaged in the great industries of the country. Having been recently in the North of England, I took the opportunity of endeavouring to ascertain the opinion of the working classes in regard to this scheme; and I found that it was decisively and unanimously against it. Let me draw the attention of the House to what has taken place in connection with the town of Richmond, in Yorkshire. That town and its surroundings formed one of the most beautiful spots in England; but the Town Council have erected gas works, and three hideous buildings covered with tar raise their hideous forms just where the river breaks into a natural waterfall. Those erections now form the

chief objects in the view, and the beauty of the site is entirely spoiled. I have no doubt that if this line of railway is allowed to be carried on from Windermere to Ambleside, there will soon be three or four ugly sheds put up, and the whole beauty of that classic spot will be destroyed. I shall, therefore, vote most decidedly against the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. I think the House should constitute itself the champion of the cause of beautiful scenery in the country, and should persistently reject proposals of this character.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) : I wish to remind the House that the Question before us is not the second reading of the Ambleside Railway Bill. That has been already disposed of, and we who opposed the second reading must bow to the decision of the House. The immediate Question before us now is what Instruction shall be given to the Select Committee as to the inquiry they are about to undertake. I am somewhat disposed to follow the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck), and deal with all the points he has entered into. I will content myself, however, with saying that I stand entirely by the Circular which was issued by the Commons Preservation Society, of which I am Chairman, and which I believe to be substantially true. I am not disposed to enter into a controversy with the right hon. Gentleman as to whether the views of the Society are worthy of consideration or not, nor am I prepared to discuss questions of taste. I have always heard the right hon. Gentleman say that he was not an authority on questions of taste, and I think that that was a right view to take of his position. Therefore, I will not defend my conduct in this or any other matter. Turning to the question before the House, it is simply this, What is the Instruction which ought to be given to the Committee about to be appointed to investigate the provisions of the Ambleside Railway Bill? Upon that point I will venture to remind the House that on two previous occasions the House has given the same Instruction which it is now asked to give in respect of a railway which proposed to enter the Lake District. In the year 1883 the Ennerdale Railway Bill came before the

House. It was opposed on the second reading by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), and a Division was taken on that occasion, when the second reading was carried. My hon. Friend then moved an Instruction precisely the same as that which he has now proposed—namely, that the Committee was entitled to take into account the general view of the public interests in regard to questions of scenery, and so forth, and to hear general evidence upon the subject. The House divided upon the Instruction, and my hon. Friend carried his Motion. Again, in the year 1884, the same question arose. The Ennerdale Bill came again before the House, and again this House gave an Instruction to the Committee in similar terms to that which my hon. Friend now moves. The House has now passed the second reading of the Ambleside Railway Bill; and what we ask is that the House shall again pass the same Instruction to the Committee as that which was passed in the years 1883 and 1884. I understood the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven to say that he did not seriously object to the Instruction, although he thought the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) was somewhat better. He raised no serious objection, however, to the proposal of my hon. Friend. The difference between the two is this: The Instruction moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen proposes that the Committee shall have power to go into the general question in the interests of the public, and that they shall be entitled to take evidence on the part of the public as to whether the scenery will be interfered with or not; whereas the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton would have the effect of confining the Instruction merely to the people who live on the spot. Now, I maintain that the true course the House should take is to allow general evidence to be given on the subject. Let me remind the House what took place in the Ennerdale case. When the Bill went before the Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen himself gave evidence as to his views on the subject. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton is passed, my hon. Friend would be precluded from giving such

evidence. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!] But if the Instruction moved by my hon. Friend is passed, he will be able to appear before the Committee, and give evidence. We contend that this is a public question in which the public are largely interested, and that it is not merely a matter in which the local interests of the people are concerned. It very often happens that, in this class of cases, the interests of the public on the spot are different from those of the general public. Let me give an illustration of this. I suppose there has been no public interest of late years so generally recognized as that which relates to the preservation of Epping Forest. Undoubtedly, the interests of the people on the spot are in favour of enclosure, whereas the interests of the public of London go in an entirely opposite direction. The interests of the public of London prevailed over those of the people on the spot. It may be—I will not say that it is—that the interest of the public in the case of the Ambleside Railway should prevail over the interest of the people on the spot. The question for the House to consider is whether those interests should be allowed to go before the Committee and present their case there, or whether the inquiry should be conducted in the way suggested by the hon. Member for Northampton. I am not going into the question who is right or wrong in this matter. The question is a very simple and a very small one—whether the House shall restrict the Instruction in the manner proposed by the hon. Member for Northampton, or allow evidence as to the general interest of the public to be brought before the Committee in respect of this proposed railway to Ambleside. I cannot doubt that the House, following the precedents set in the case of the Ennerdale Railway in 1883 and 1884, will agree to the Instruction moved by my hon. Friend.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): I shall only detain the House for a very few minutes. I only desire to point out the direction in which the proposals contained in this Bill go, and how necessary it is to pass the Instruction moved by the hon. Member for Aberdeen. I believe that many hon. Members voted for the second reading of the Bill not because they liked the measure—because I believe that the great majority of the House disliked it—but because they

thought that a Bill of this kind ought to go upstairs and be dealt with by a Select Committee. If the Bill be rejected upstairs, those who are against it will have nothing further to say; but if it were passed by the Committee upstairs, and this Instruction were rejected, the opponents of the Bill would be in a position to say that the Committee had been crippled very much by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton, and would be fortified in that which they very much desire to do—namely, to throw out the Bill altogether. They will certainly be considerably helped in their opposition to the Bill on the third reading if this Instruction to the Committee is rejected by the House.

MR. GILES (Southampton): I am very sorry to disagree with the hon. Member who spoke last; but it does appear to me that, when the inhabitants of a district have subscribed their money to construct a line of railway for their own convenience, they should not be interfered with by an irresponsible body, hailing, I believe, from Manchester, and calling themselves "The Lake District Defence Society." I should have thought that Manchester would have been about the last place in the world where we should have expected to find so much sentiment. I am quite certain that Manchester itself does not allow any sentimental nonsense to interfere with its material interests. Why not carry the question of sentiment out to its proper conclusion? If you are consistent in your sentiment you ought to go much further, and should take steps to abolish the gunpowder mills, the gas works, the bobbin manufactory in the neighbourhood of Ambleside, and the steamboats on Lake Windermere. These are things which certainly do not add to any sentimental view of the beauties of scenery. But sentiment does not appear to me to be the only motive for the Instruction to the Committee. This Bill has already passed a second reading, and this is an attempt, by a side-wind, to obtain a *locus standi* before the Committee which I think the Lake District Defence Society should not get. I shall, therefore, oppose the Instruction of the hon. Member for Aberdeen.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): I think the Amendment has probably been drawn by some old Parliamentary hand. It appears to me that if the Amendment

of my hon. Friend below me were carried, not only would the evidence be confined to local evidence, but it would have the effect of rejecting the Instruction altogether.

MR. SPEAKER: Has not the hon. Member already spoken?

MR. W. H. JAMES: No, Sir. All I did was to move the adjournment on the last occasion. There are probably many hon. Members in this House who have never served upon a Parliamentary Committee, and when the question of the Instruction came before them, the learned counsel who represent the promoters would urge that local evidence would mean merely the evidence of those who have already acquired a *locus standi* to appear before the Committee. Therefore, if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton is carried, all questions affecting the interest of the general public would be carefully kept out of sight.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I hope the House will support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. I happen to have been born and to have spent all the younger years of my life in the neighbourhood of Lake Windermere. I know the whole of the scenery there, and the only complaint I have to make of this Bill is that it does not come near enough to the Lake. Hon. Members have talked about the interests of the toiling millions, and their desire to prevent the scenery from being spoiled. The fact is, that until this railway is made, the toiling millions cannot reach this part of the Lake at all, and the whole of the beautiful scenery is practically shut out from the tourists and cheap trippers from Manchester, Liverpool, and the great manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. I believe it to be a selfish policy that would keep the Lake District entirely for the rich, who are able to hire conveyances and go down to the water-side. If this railway is made, it will put Lake Windermere within the reach of the whole of the cheap trippers and factory hands of Lancashire, together with their wives and little ones; and will place the residents of the locality within easy reach of every other part of the Kingdom.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): Perhaps I may be allowed, for one moment, to recall to the recollection

of the House what is the precise issue we are asked to vote. It is not whether the Ambleside Bill is to be read a second time. That was done a few days ago, and the Bill was ordered to be sent upstairs. The only question before us now is what kind of evidence shall be admitted by the Committee on the subject. The Instruction moved by the hon. Member for Aberdeen proposes to admit evidence as to the effect of the proposals contained in the Bill upon the scenery of the country. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton does not in the least degree diminish that kind of evidence—namely, evidence as to the scenery of the country; but the hon. Member wishes to restrict the persons who are to give evidence on that point to those who are in the locality. There may be reasons for rejecting the Instruction altogether; but if you are to take evidence as to the effect of the Railway on the scenery of the country, it appears to me impossible to say that the Select Committee shall only hear one class of persons upon that question. The Committee should hear whatever evidence may be submitted to it on the subject, and to say that they shall only hear persons living on the spot would be to restrict unduly the Instruction to the Committee. If you care to allow the Committee to entertain the question at all, you should follow the Instruction in the case of the Ennerdale Bill. I trust that no attempt will be made to restrict the evidence that may be offered, for it appears to me that such a course would simply stultify the force of the Instruction altogether. At the same time I hope the Committee will be strong enough to say that they will not have a repetition of the same evidence from the same class of persons, but that they will confine it within practicable limits. I hope that the House, with that understanding, will accept the Instruction.

MR. SCLATER BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): For my part I hope the House will reject the whole of the Instruction, and that the Committee will bring common sense to bear upon the case, taking the evidence only of the witnesses who will naturally be brought before them. I altogether repudiate the idea that the Committee is to be bound by the case submitted to them by the promoters and opponents of the Bill. It is the duty of a Committee to con-

sider, in all cases, the interests of the public, and if they see reason to reject a Bill on its merits they may do so, notwithstanding what evidence the promoters or opponents may adduce. If I were the Chairman of a Committee like this, I should feel excessively embarrassed by an Instruction of this kind, calling upon the Committee to receive evidence on the scenery of all parts of the Lake District. I believe the evidence will be fully brought out by witnesses on both sides, without any Instruction to the Committee at all.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 225; Noes 118: Majority 107.—(Div. List, No. 20.)

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 231; Noes 133: Majority 98.—(Div. List, No. 21.)

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Ambleside Railway Bill, to inquire and report whether the proposed Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public, who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject.—(Mr. Bryce.)

QUESTIONS.

INDIA—EXTENSION OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM IN INDIA AND BURMAH.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Secretary of State for India, in accordance with the assurance given last Session, has taken any steps to construct railways in India and Burmah, which would lead to the development of those countries, and prove beneficial to the industries of Great Britain?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The estimated capital expended on Indian railways for the year ending March 31, 1887, is 974 lakhs—512 by the Government of India, 462 by guaranteed and subsidized companies. By the end of 1887 it is estimated that 1,167 additional miles of railway will be opened. The Mandalay Railway (220 miles) was authorized as a State line by the Secretary of State in November, 1886, and work has now been begun at both ends of the line. The construction of the Bengal-Nagpoor Railway (784 miles) has

now been entrusted to a guaranteed Company. The Bolan Railway to Quetta and certain sections of the Scinde-Pisheen Railway beyond Quetta will be opened to the public by the end of March; 90 miles of the Bellary-Kistna Railway will be opened immediately. It is expected that about 100 miles of the Indian Midland, which is being constructed in its several sections simultaneously, will be opened in the course of the year. In addition to these, about 220 miles of the Southern Mahratta Company's system have been opened since September 30, 1886.

NEWFOUNDLAND—THE COD FISHERIES.

MR. COURTNEY KENNY (York, W.R., Barnsley) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Colony of Newfoundland is now in danger of permanent commercial ruin, owing to the impossibility of maintaining its staple industry, the cod fishery, against the competition of the French fishermen, in consequence of the latter receiving from their Government a bounty of more than 50 per cent., which enables them to take fish on the banks of Newfoundland, and afterwards sell it profitably in European markets at a price below the cost of production; whether the Bill, recently passed by the Legislature of Newfoundland to restrain the export of bait, would have secured to the Colony the control of the sole natural advantage which it possesses for carrying on its fisheries against so unequal a competition; and, whether he can state to the House the reasons which led Her Majesty's Government to advise that the Royal Assent should be withheld from that Bill?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The statements contained in the first and second paragraphs of the Question are, I regret to say, substantially in accordance with the representations of the Governor and Legislature of Newfoundland; but Her Majesty's Government have requested further information as to the exact effects and operation upon the markets of the French bounty system which has recently produced such serious results to the Colonial Fishery. As to the third paragraph, the reasons which have led Her Majesty's Government to advise that the Royal Assent should not be

given to the Bait Bill are set forth in a Despatch of February 3. The matter is one of importance; and as it would not be possible, within the ordinary limits of an answer to state fully those reasons, I have to-day laid a copy of that Despatch upon the Table of the House. In the meantime I shall be very glad to show it to the hon. Member.

ADMIRALTY REGULATIONS—SUPPORT AND EDUCATION OF CATHOLIC ORPHANS.

MR. MC CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What is the number of Catholic orphans provided for under the Regulations of the Lords of the Admiralty; what educational establishments in Ireland and in England are authorized to receive such orphans; what annual allowance is given by the Admiralty to these establishments for the support and education of each orphan; what is the entire expenditure, and how much of it goes to establishments in Ireland; and, whether mothers of Catholic orphans, residing in Ireland, are obliged to send their children to England in order to get the benefit of this allowance; and, if so, whether the Lords of the Admiralty will sanction Catholic schools in Ireland for the education of the orphans of Catholic seamen who die in the Service?

MR. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT (A LORD of the ADMIRALTY) (Sheffield, Ecclesall) (who replied) said: The number of Roman Catholic children at present provided for in orphanages at the expense of Greenwich Hospital is 32. The educational establishments selected for the reception of these children are:—For boys.—England: St. Andrew's School, Barnet; Ireland: St. Vincent's Orphanage, Glasnevin, Dublin; the Christian Brothers' School, Greenmount, Cork. For girls.—England: Orphanage of the Sisters of Mercy, Norwood; St. Teresa's Orphanage, Plymouth; Ireland: St. Clare's Orphanage, Harold's Cross, Dublin; Orphanages of the Sisters of Mercy at Cork and at Queenstown. Payment is made at an average rate of about £20 per annum for each child. The entire expenditure for the maintenance of orphans and children in necessitous circumstances is £5,700 per annum, and of this amount the sum of £630 is paid for Roman Catholic children. The amount paid to

establishments in Ireland is £130. The mothers of Catholic children residing in Ireland are not obliged to send their children to England, arrangements being made to send them to the schools before-mentioned. It may be added that, in addition to the above, Catholic orphans are maintained in the Royal Hospital School at Greenwich.

SOUTH AFRICA—ZULULAND.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Times* newspaper of 10th February, that Dinizulu and the other Zulu Chiefs were not summoned by Mr. Osborn to take part in the settlement of the new boundaries of Zululand till the work of the Boundary Commission had been completed, and that at the meeting of 28th January to confirm the decisions of the Commission Mr. Osborn forbade the presence of white men, and refused to permit the Zulus to communicate with Natal, or in any way with the outside world until they had consented to the proposed annexation; whether the boundary line originally insisted on by Sir Arthur Havelock, and approved by Earl Granville, was to be drawn from Ibanango Hill to Imhlazatye Hill and thence in a northerly direction to the Pongo River, the line now agreed upon and approved by the present Ministry surrenders to the Boers on the North the important district of Umgojana, forming a wedge between Eastern Zululand and Swaziland, and on the South another wedge-shaped strip of territory between Eastern Zululand and the Reserve; whether the boundary as now agreed upon will seriously interfere with the control of communications, and with the interests both of the Zulus and of Natal; whether the Boers are already attempting to carry out in Swaziland, which is now the scene of numerous gold mining enterprizes, the same tactics that have been so successful in Zululand; whether the Zulu Chiefs have protested against the new boundary, and have again signified a desire to appeal directly to Her Majesty's Government in England; and, whether further Papers, giving particulars of the more recent negotiations between Sir Arthur Havelock and the Boers, and specifying the exact boundary agreed to, will be laid upon the Table of the House before

the Estimates affecting South Africa are moved?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The hon. Member asks me six questions. With regard to the first and fifth, the Zulu Chiefs were invited to send a Commissioner to act with the British and Boer Commissioners in the demarcation of the boundary, and it is believed that he was present from December 12 to the conclusion of the demarcation on January 25. During this period Dinizulu and other Zulu Chiefs attempted, under the advice of certain white persons, to reopen the general question of the partition of Zululand, and Sir Arthur Havelock promised to receive them after the demarcation had been completed. We have no knowledge of the alleged occurrences at the meeting of January 28. The Zulu Chiefs were informed that Her Majesty's Government could not entertain any appeal for the reversal of the arrangement, and since then favourable answers have been received from them. With regard to Questions 2 and 3, the boundary line has been altered as stated, for reasons which will appear in the Papers which I have presented this afternoon. The boundary, as now settled, does not interfere with communications, or injure the interests of Natal; and it recovers for the Zulus a considerable amount of the territory which they had practically surrendered to the Boers in 1884. Free transit through the new republic will be provided in the Convention. In reply to Question 4, some trespasses of Boers into Swaziland have occurred; but the acquisitions of land there have been principally by British subjects. Her Majesty's Government are inquiring into the condition of Swaziland. With regard to Question 6, I have already stated that the Papers have been presented this afternoon.

PRISON SITES—HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES—COLDBATH FIELDS PRISON.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Government intend to act, in reference to the prison sites, upon the statement of the Prime Minister, as expressed in his special Memorandum on the first Report of the Commission on the Housing of the

Working Classes, to the effect that the State should sell the prison sites to some authority or trust that would build thereon workmen's dwellings at cost price; and, whether the Government have received any offers for Coldbath Fields, or taken any steps to dispose of that site to such Bodies as can be trusted to use it for the purpose of building thereon the cheapest class of dwellings?

CAPTAIN PENTON (Finsbury, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Peabody Trustees have made an offer for the Coldbath Fields Prison site, for the purpose of erecting artizans' dwellings thereon; and, if so, whether, before accepting this or any other offer for the entire site, he will give the Metropolitan Board of Works, or the Clerkenwell Vestry, time to consider the advisability of tendering for a portion of the site, to be retained as an open space, in accordance with the Resolutions of those Boards, as to the necessity for such a space in this densely-populated neighbourhood?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have stated more than once in this House that it is my desire to dispose of the prison sites in the way recommended by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes. I have received an offer for the site of Coldbath Fields Prison from a Society whose purpose it is to provide cheap and healthy homes for the working classes. This offer is now under consideration. I have received no offer from the Peabody Trustees. Any proposal either from the Metropolitan Board of Works or from the Clerkenwell Vestry for the retention of a portion of the site as an open space will receive my careful attention. I must add that both these Bodies have had ample time to consider the question.

GOLD AND SILVER CURRENCY—(ROYAL COMMISSION)—THE FIRST REPORT.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Government is in a position to give the House any information as to the approximate time the first Report of the Royal Commission on the Gold and Silver Currency will be issued?

Mr. Jennings

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) (who replied), said, he was unable to give any date on which the Report would be issued; but he could assure the hon. Member that, so far as he was aware, the Commissioners were not anxious to prolong the inquiry, which was extremely laborious and very intricate.

WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, If he can inform the House whether Mr. Page, the engineer for the construction of Westminster Bridge, gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons to the effect that Westminster Bridge was not strong enough to bear the weight of a tramway; and, whether that related to the crown of the bridge or its foundations?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I have not been able to find any statement of Mr. Page, the engineer, in his evidence before a Committee of the House to the effect that Westminster Bridge was not strong enough to bear the weight of a tramway; but, on the contrary, I am informed that on March 3, 1871, Mr. Page reported that the bridge might safely be loaded with 17,000 tons, and that a load of 12 tons might be carried over the bridge on two wheels; and a tramcar of four wheels, fully loaded, would certainly not reach the limits thus assigned (12 tons on two wheels). No doubt had ever been entertained by the advisers of the Office of Works as to Westminster Bridge being able to bear the weight of tramway traffic.

ADMIRALTY—"H.M.S. FALCON"—PRIZE MONEY.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he can state when the prize money due to the officers and men of H.M.S. *Falcon* for certain dhows captured in October, 1885, will be distributed?

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (A Lord of the Admiralty) (Marylebone, E.) (who replied) said: It cannot be stated at present when the prize money will be payable, the distribution being dependent upon further information from the Foreign Office on the subject.

INLAND REVENUE—COLLECTION OF INCOME TAX.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the case that in the years 1886-7 the method of collecting the Income Tax has been altered; whether, previous to 1886, the local tax collectors had to collect the taxes in January and February, and pay in the entire sum on some particular day towards the end of February; whether, in 1886, the collectors received instructions to collect and pay in the taxes weekly, though the general receiving day in February was retained; whether, in 1887, the general receiving day has been abolished, and very peremptory instructions issued as to the weekly collection, and that local collectors who did not act on these instructions have been threatened with fines and legal proceedings; whether he is aware that these changes, which, whether authorized or not, have been in operation in certain country districts, cause much inconvenience, both to the local tax collectors and to the people of the districts; and, if he will cause the irritating instructions referred to, if issued, to be reconsidered?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): It can scarcely be said that the method of collecting the Income Tax has been altered, nor has any alteration been made in the months in which the collection takes place; but since January, 1885, the collectors have been required to pay over the amounts in their hands weekly, instead of retaining them till the middle or end of February. This year (1887) the practice of holding so-called "General Receipts" for taxes elsewhere than at the Inland Revenue Offices has been discontinued; the system of weekly payment having shown that it was quite unnecessary to incur the expense of holding "Receipts" away from the collectors' offices. The local collectors are responsible to the Commissioners by whom they are appointed, and are subject to their orders; but I am not aware that any of them have been threatened with fines or legal proceedings. I am not aware that the changes have caused inconvenience at all commensurate with the economy which has been effected, and there is no

information at the Treasury of irritation having been caused.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)—NEW LINE OF ST. MARTIN'S PLACE.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether Her Majesty's Government will take advantage of the street improvements at St. Martin in the Fields to extend the National Gallery to Hemming's Row and to the new line of St. Martin's Place, in accordance with the suggestion of the Institute of British Architects?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): This question has been for some time under consideration; but no final decision has been taken on the subject. The fact is, I am sorry to say, that we have no funds for any such building operations at present.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—COMPENSATION TO THE LOCAL POLICE.

MR. MC CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the officers and men of the Belfast Local Police Force have received from Government any compensation for the serious injuries inflicted upon them during the recent riots; and, if so, to what extent, and how many officers and men have received compensation; and, whether it was given in proportion to the injuries sustained?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Members of the Royal Irish Constabulary are not entitled to any compensation for injuries inflicted upon them in the discharge of their duty unless they are thereby incapacitated for further service in the Force. Of the men of the Local Force in Belfast, two were injured during the late riots. Only one has as yet received compensation. The pension awarded to him was in proportion to the injuries received.

VACCINATION—INCREASE OF SYPHILIS.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the disease of syphilis has increased amongst children in this country since the introduction of compulsory vaccination in 1853;

whether this increase was most conspicuous in the case of children under one year of age; and, whether the greatest increase in the number of deaths from this disease in any one year as compared with the preceding year, was in 1854, the year after compulsory vaccination had been introduced into this country?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have communicated with the Registrar General, and am informed that, so far as can be gathered from the old Reports, the mortality of children from syphilis has increased not only from 1853, when compulsory vaccination was introduced, but from the first year of which any records exist—namely, 1848. The increase from 1853 to 1885, the last year for which the figures are published, was not most conspicuous among children under one year of age. On the contrary, it was much greater among children from one to five years old than among children under one. The increase in 1854, as compared with 1853, was greater than in any other year as compared with its immediate predecessor. But the increase, so far from being most conspicuous among children under one, was vastly less among them than among children over one and under five, and even less than among adults, or rather of persons from five years upwards; so that it is quite impossible to attribute the increase in 1854 to the introduction of compulsory vaccination.

INLAND REVENUE—ASSESSMENTS IN EALING AND BRENTFORD.

MR. BIGWOOD (Middlesex, Brentford) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the assessments under Schedule A of the licensed victuallers in the Parliamentary Divisions of Ealing and Brentford have been raised to a very large extent; and, if the said assessments have been made by competent assessors, or by whom, and on what basis; whether licensed victuallers in these Divisions have been charged Inhabited House Duty upon the amount paid for goodwill and furniture as well as upon the rent, thereby paying taxes and licences upon capital invested as well as upon the value of the premises; whether the assessors are paid by salary or commission; if numerous complaints have been made to the authorities as to

the manner in which the taxes are collected; whether, in consequence of the increased assessments, the charges for licences have been nearly doubled; whether he is aware that the reply to a Memorial on this subject forwarded to the Board of Inland Revenue stated that—

“Neither the Board nor the Special Commissioners of Income Tax have any authority to interfere;”

and whether such answer is in accordance with law; and, whether, in reply to the said Memorial, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer stated—

“That the matter has been decided by the Local Commissioners, whose decision neither the Government nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer personally have power to override;”

and, if such power is vested in the Local Commissioners without the right of appeal?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): New Property Tax and House Duty assessments were made in 1885 for the parishes comprised in the Parliamentary Divisions of Ealing and Brentford by competent assessors; and the valuations were in some cases increased, not only on licensed victuallers, but in all cases where the previous valuations were considered insufficient. The new assessments for House Duty were based upon what was deemed to be the fair letting value of the premises without including goodwill or furniture. Local assessors are paid by a commission of 1½d in the £ of duty collected. As a rule, the valuations for House Duty have been adopted for the year 1886-7 as the basis for charging the licensed duty on premises occupied by licensed victuallers. The increase in the License Duties does not in the aggregate exceed 5 per cent in both Divisions. As to the actual collection of taxes, no particular complaints have been received; but a Memorial as to the assessments was sent to the Board of Inland Revenue in December, 1885, which led to a full inquiry. It is true that the District Commissioners are the judges of the annual value of houses and premises charged to the Income Tax and Inhabited House Duty. The proper values cannot be decided without local knowledge; and no appeal lies from the local commissioners to the Board of Inland Revenue or the Government.

STATE OF IRELAND—EXTRA POLICE
IN CORK COUNTY.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Resolution of the County Cork Grand Jury urging the removal of the extra police stationed in the county, as their presence involved a useless expenditure, was passed in the month of July last year; and, whether the publication of the Plan of Campaign did not take place till late in the following October; and, if so, what steps were taken in that interval of three months to give effect to the wish of the County Cork Grand Jury, as expressed in their Resolution?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The subject of the reduction of extra police is one which is constantly kept in view, but it has not at any time since July last been deemed safe by the Authorities to reduce the force in the county of Cork.

EDUCATION (SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT)—ELEMENTARY SCHOLARSHIPS.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Vice President of the Council on Education, Whether any Memorials have been received by the Committee of Council praying for some modification of the Rules of the Science and Art Department, under which local managers of approved schools, may, with the sanction and assistance of the Science and Art Department, grant Elementary Scholarships of less value than £10; and, whether he has considered if some reduction of the £10 limit might not be extended advantageously to meet the varied necessities of different places?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): A few Memorials praying for the establishment of Scholarships of less value than £10 were received by the Science and Art Department, the principal one being from the Gateshead School Board. The arrangements for the Scholarships were fully considered last year, and, as the hon. Member will see by reference to the Science and Art Directory for the current year, a considerable change has been made in the Rules to which he refers. The Scholarship, including the local contribution, now amounts for the

first year to £9; and as its object, as stated by Rule 47, is to afford a real maintenance allowance for poor students with tuition fees, and not a mere prize; it has been deemed inadvisable for the Department to aid in the formation of a Scholarship of a less amount.

CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS
—J. M. WILLIAMSON.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If Mr. Williamson, lately appointed Sub-Sheriff of the County of Dublin, is the same person as John Malet Williamson, who is scheduled in the Report of the Commission (of 1870) on the Dublin Election of 1868, as having been guilty of aiding and abetting corrupt practices; and, if so, what action the Government will take in regard to his appointment?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): It is understood that the Mr. Williamson, lately appointed Sub-Sheriff of the county of Dublin, is the person of that name who was scheduled in the Report of the Commission of 1870, on the Dublin election. He had at one time before acted as Sub-Sheriff to Dublin County. The statute under which the Commission was held attaches certain definite disabilities to a person so scheduled for a period of seven years; but as this period has expired, and as such disabilities did not include the Office of Sub-Sheriff, the Government are advised that they would not be justified in taking any action in the matter.

THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SITTINGS IN CLARE CO.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether on the last occasion on which the Chief Commissioners, under Land Act, 1881, sat in the county of Clare, they did so only for two days; whether then they did not decide more than one-third of the appeals from the Sub-Commissioners in that county; whether a very large number of appeals now await their decision; whether W. H. Frost, of Ennis, only one of the solicitors in Clare, is attorney for 260 appeals; whether rents in some of these appeals have been fixed by the Sub-Commissioners two years ago; whether

the attention of the Head Commissioners will be directed to this state of affairs; when may a final decision be expected in these numerous cases; and, whether, to accommodate the poor farmers of West Clare, the Chief Commissioners will hold a court in Kilrush, which is the chief town in that Division of the county, and is 20 miles from Ennis?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Land Commissioners report that they sat at Ennis for six days in last March, and at the close of their sitting had heard nearly two-thirds of the appeals from the county of Clare. It is nevertheless true that a large number of cases are pending, and that some of them are of two years' standing. The Commissioners will use their best exertions to get on with these cases. Some will be heard in April at Limerick—others at Ennis in July. Having regard to the general convenience, they cannot arrange to sit at Kilrush. The statement in the Question with regard to Mr. W. H. Frost appears to be entirely erroneous. He is, I am informed, solicitor in two appeal cases—not 260 as stated.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—SECRETARIES OF GRAND JURIES.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether Secretaries of Grand Juries in Ireland are entitled to claim any fee on receiving tenders, prior to Presentment Sessions, for the execution of any public works?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I am not aware Secretaries of Grand Juries are entitled to claim any fee on receiving tenders for any public works beyond a small sum for the forms issued by them.

RIVERS POLLUTION—POLLUTION OF THE UPPER THAMES.

COLONEL DAWNAY (York, N.R., Thirsk) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether Her Majesty's Government will call the attention of the Thames Conservancy Board to the pollution of the waters of the Upper Thames, from which the water supply of the inhabitants of London is drawn, by the sewage from house boats and steam launches?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) (who replied) said: The Conservators of the Thames have prepared a series of bye-laws, Art. 14 (9) which renders it an offence to cast or throw into or to cause or to suffer to fall or flow into the river any sewage, rubbish, or other offensive matter or thing. The bye-laws were published in *The London Gazette* on the 18th of this month, with a view to their submission to Her Majesty in Council for confirmation.

ARMY (AMMUNITION)—SOLID-DRAWN CARTRIDGES.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the solid-drawn cartridges, the manufacture of which the Surveyor General of the Ordnance stated was begun by the Government in 1885, can be used in any of the existing rifles in the hands of our soldiers; whether, although firing a bullet of precisely the same calibre as that of the notoriously defective Boxer cartridge, these solid-drawn cartridges can only be used in the machine guns; and, whether this entails carrying into action two sorts of ammunition, which cannot be used interchangeably in the barrels of either weapon, Martini-Henry or machine gun?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The solid-drawn cartridges now made can be used with all rifles at present in the hands of the troops. The machine guns now in use fire a special cartridge, and the result is that two sorts of ammunition have to be carried into action. When, however, the new small-bore rifle has been introduced the machine guns will be adapted to the same bore, and the cartridges for both will be identical.

THE CURRENCY—DETERIORATION OF THE GOLD COINAGE.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he is aware that the condition of the gold currency continues to deteriorate, and that at least one half of the gold in circulation has ceased to be legal tender; whether his attention has been called to the fact that silver now circulates at a premium of 42 per

cent above its intrinsic value, as against 10 per cent when the present Mint regulations were established; whether he is aware that the bronze money in circulation in the east of London is increased to the extent of 20 per cent by the admixture of French and other foreign coins, which can be imported into this country with a profit of 5 per cent; and, whether he intends to take any steps to improve the condition of the metallic circulation?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, he was aware of the gold coinage of the country being in a very unsatisfactory condition, and also of the other facts to which the hon. member called attention; though he was not prepared to admit their existence to the full extent implied in the Question. The question of currency was one which demanded the early attention of the House; but he hoped that the short time during which he had been in his present Office would be taken as an excuse for his not introducing, or promising to introduce, a measure at once. He could, however, assure the hon. Member that the subject should occupy his attention very seriously.

ALLOTMENTS FOR SMALL HOUSEHOLDERS—LEGISLATION.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the President of the Local Government Board, whether he is able to say when he will introduce the Bill to facilitate the provision of allotments for small householders, named in the Speech from the Throne; and, whether it will be introduced before or after the English Local Government Bill?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am not able to say when it may be in the power of the Government to introduce a Bill on the subject of allotments.

EXPENDITURE OF LIGHTHOUSE BOARDS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the detailed voucher for £179, expended by the Commissioners of Northern Lights on their annual dinner, published at page 200 of the Civil Service Appropriation Accounts, was supplied voluntarily by the

Secretary of that Body, or sent in accordance with the requirements of the Board of Trade; and, in the latter case, if he will inform the House why similar detailed vouchers were not required for the £1,300 expended by the Trinity Brethren on "Housekeeping and Entertainments," and the £250 expended by the Commissioners of Irish Lights on "Housekeeping and Annual Dinner?"

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I cannot, within the limits of a reply to a Question, give the hon. Member a definite answer; but the whole matter will be before the Public Accounts Committee next week.

DR. CAMERON said he asked what were the requirements of the Board of Trade in the matter? Surely the hon. Gentleman could answer that.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS said, he was afraid he could not supplement the answer he had given. He should be obliged to go into a very long explanation, far exceeding the limits of an answer to a Question.

THE CIVIL SERVICE—LOWER DIVISION CLERKS AND WRITERS.

MR. MORGAN HOWARD (Camberwell, Dulwich) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, whether any writers have yet been promoted to Lower Division clerkships under the Treasury Minute of December last; and, whether he is aware that many permanent Heads of Departments are in doubt as to the mode of procedure to be adopted before recommending deserving writers for promotion; and, if so, whether it is the intention of the Treasury to issue specific instructions on the matter at an early date?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): No copyists have yet been promoted to Lower Division clerkships, nor can any such promotion take place until careful inquiry has been made into each case. I ought to add that in view of the necessity for economy—which I am sure is appreciated no less by the House of Commons than it is by Her Majesty's Government—the Treasury would hardly feel justified in increasing the total number of Lower Division clerkships; and I have reason to believe that in some Departments it would be possible to reduce the number of the staff without impairing the efficiency or

promptness of the work. With reference; to the second paragraph of the Question, my answer would be in the negative.

THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SALE OF LANDS IN COUNTY DONEGAL.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to an advertisement by the Chief Clerk of the Irish Land Commission in *The Derry Journal* of the 21st instant, notifying an order in the matter of the estate of John Harris Hazlett Swiney, an owner of land, for a sale of part of the lands of Clooneymere, County Donegal, to William Daniel Swiney, the tenant thereof, by means of a vesting order of the Commission; Whether the land in question has been, and is, in the occupation of John Harris Hazlett Swiney the vendor, and whether William Daniel Swiney, described in the advertisement as the tenant of the land lives with his father, and is his servant and manager; and whether, under these circumstances, the vesting order for sale of this land will be issued by the Land Commission?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Land Commissioners report that the farm referred to is not in the occupation of the vendor, as alleged in this question, but is, and has been for eight years, in the occupation of the tenant-purchaser under a contract of tenancy entered into eight years ago. The Commissioners are satisfied that there is ample security for the advance asked for. The relationship of father and son does not exclude a tenant from his statutory right to purchase if, as in this case, he be *bond fide* in occupation of the holding under a contract of tenancy; but in all such cases the Commissioners investigate the circumstances very closely. There is no residence on the farm; but this tenant resides partly on another farm of his 12 miles off, and partly with the vendor.

SOUTH AMERICA—CHILI—IMPRISONMENT OF A SAILOR NAMED CARROL AT PUNTA ARENAS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Foreign Office is yet in possession of the facts of the case of the sailor Carrol, as to which

inquiry was promised last Session; whether this man was arrested and imprisoned at Punta Arenas from the 3rd to the 10th June last, without being brought to trial or told of what he was accused; whether he was on the 6th June flogged; whether he was for several days kept in irons in a damp cell; whether Captain Anderson, of the *Rippling Wave*, saw him marched in irons across the plaza; whether on representations being made by a Mr. Edward Stanton Yonge, proposals were privately made to that Gentleman that if he would allow the case to drop Carrol would be set at liberty, and his passage paid to some other place; whether before his release Carrol was compelled to sign a paper (in Spanish, a language which he cannot read), in which he is made to exonerate the local authorities; and, whether the Government will order an inquiry to be made into all the circumstances of the case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Since the hon. Member asked a Question about this case on the 3rd of September, Mr. Fraser, Her Majesty's Minister at Santiago, has reported as to the alleged ill-treatment of Carrol. He is stated to have come as cook, in a British ship, from the Falkland Islands to Punta Arenas, and shortly after his arrival there he was arrested for drunkenness and other offences; an attempted rape being among the charges brought against him. He escaped from gaol with some prisoners accused of assassination, whom he helped to free from their chains, and wandered about the country with them for some days. He was subsequently re-arrested, and it was after this that the flogging is alleged to have occurred; though the Governor of Punta Arenas assured the Vice Consul that nothing of the kind had taken place by his order or with his knowledge. Mr. Fraser learnt that the Chilean authorities were willing to release Carrol if Mr. Yonge, a merchant residing in Punta Arenas, who had taken an interest in Carrol, would engage to convey him out of the country, and recommended that this course should be adopted. No other particulars have reached Her Majesty's Government, and the case, as far as it has been brought under their notice, does not seem to call for interference.

STATE OF IRELAND—PROCLAMATION
OF MEETING IN WICKLOW AND
WEXFORD.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, In virtue of what authority the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland prohibited the holding of the meeting of tenant farmers and labourers of the counties of Wicklow and Wexford, appointed to be held on Sunday last at Coolgreany, County Wexford, to advance the interest of the Irish National Cause; and, if he will lay upon the Table of the House a Copy of the Information referred to in the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I am advised that the Lord Lieutenant has authority at common law to proclaim a meeting believed to be for an illegal purpose. I cannot undertake to lay upon the Table a Copy of the information referred to.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman is there any decision under the common law giving the Lord Lieutenant that power; and whether, if the Government hold they are entitled to proclaim meetings called for a perfectly legal object, they are justified in keeping back the information on which they act?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have already answered the question of the hon. Gentleman.

OUTRAGES, &c., (IRELAND) CO. CLARE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Under what circumstances Head Constable O'Halloran, of the Irish Constabulary, stationed at Ennis, lately gave a £10 bank note to a man named Patrick Loughrey, of Knockreddan, Crusheen, County Clare; whether Loughrey subsequently assaulted Mr. O'Halloran in a public house at Ennis, by striking him on the face with a tumbler, but no action has since been taken in the matter; whether Mr. O'Halloran was concerned in collecting evidence in the case against the brothers Delahunty, on whose behalf, since their conviction, a Memorial declaring belief in their innocence has been presented to the Irish Executive; and, whether the Government will direct a public

inquiry to be held into the conduct of the Head Constable? I may add, Sir, that the point of my Question has been completely cut out by some official hand?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Head Constable was led to believe that Loughrey was able and willing to give him information with regard to a matter into which it was his duty to inquire, and paid for it. The assault was a trifling affair, the Head Constable not having been touched. He was engaged in the ordinary course of his duty in the prosecution of the Delahunty's some years ago. I think he was wrong in this particular case; but he is spoken of very highly by all those under whom he has served, including Sir Redvers Buller, and I do not propose to direct a public inquiry into his conduct.

MR. COX (Clare, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he proposes to sanction an attempt by the police to manufacture informers by making use of the names of hon. Members of this House?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do not know to what the hon. Member refers.

MR. COX: This Head Constable wrote to Loughrey and attached my name to the letter.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have already said I think the Head Constable did wrong.

MR. SEXTON: He was guilty of forgery.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE
JURY SYSTEM—THE QUEEN v. JOHN
DILLON.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in the case of the "Queen v. Parnell and others," the panel was struck in the city of Dublin; whether the panel originally contained but 48 names; whether, on the jury which tried the case, there were eight Catholics, three Protestants, and one Quaker; and whether he will inform the House why the precedent then set has not been followed in the case of the "Queen v. John Dillon and others?"

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, may I ask him whether in

the case of the "Queen v. Parnell" the provisions of Lord O'Hagan's Act were not entirely set aside, and the jury struck under what was called the old system?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The proceedings in the case of "The Queen v. Parnell" were taken by criminal information, and the trial was had before a special jury, which the law requires should be selected in a prescribed mode from a panel of 48 names. The defendants in the case of "The Queen v. Dillon and others" were returned for trial in the ordinary way, and the case could not be tried by a special jury unless it were removed into the Queen's Bench Division by writ of *certiorari*. This course was not taken for the reason, among others, that as the law now stands defendants, by exercising their full right of challenge, could in almost every instance prevent a trial by special jury from taking place. I do not know, nor have I any means of knowing, the religion of the jurors who tried the case of "The Queen v. Parnell."

MR. W. A. MACDONALD said, the right hon. and learned Gentleman had not answered the principal point in the Question—namely, whether in the case of "The Queen v. Parnell and others" the panel had not been struck in the city of Dublin, and why the same course had not been pursued in the case of "The Queen v. Dillon?"

MR. HOLMES said, in the case of "The Queen v. Parnell" the venue was laid in the city of Dublin. The case of "The Queen v. Dillon" was tried under different circumstances, and the venue was laid in the county of Dublin.

ARMY AND NAVY—"CONTRACTS AND SUPPLIES."

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether in almost every other country but the United Kingdom all tenders for Government contracts, when opened, have the amounts thereof publicly disclosed; in whose interest the prices quoted in the offers lodged by tradesmen, manufacturers, and others are not now made known; and, further, in view of the recent admissions affecting the whole system of Army and Navy "Contracts and Supplies," whether he will consider the advisability, unless in rare

and exceptional cases, of having all tenders for Government contracts duly opened, and the amounts published?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I am informed that the usual practice abroad is as described in the hon. Member's Question—namely, that the amounts of tenders are publicly disclosed. In the Contract Department of the War Office the prices tendered have always been regarded as confidential, in the interest not of the Department, but of the manufacturer. All tenders are duly opened by a Board, on which the supply and financial authorities of the Department are represented. I am not prepared to admit that recent statements have tended to throw doubt on the system pursued; but, on the other hand, there is a good deal to be said against secrecy; and I will undertake to consider, in conjunction with the Admiralty, whether the balance of advantage on the whole lies on the side of publicity.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—THE CANTEN COMMITTEE OF FORT GEORGE, INVERNESS.

MR. FRASER MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether Colour Sergeant Mackie, who was manager of the grocer's shop in Fort George (in the county of Inverness) in 1883, still draws his pension; if, in an action raised by Mackie in the Sheriff Court of Inverness-shire, against Major Hilton, the President of the Canteen Committee at Fort George, the Sheriff Substitute found that Mackie had misapplied or was short of the sum of £23 16s. 6d.; has Mackie refunded this money; and, if not, has he, under the Regulations, a just claim to any pension; and, what representations, if any, has Mackie made to the War Office Authorities on the subject?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said, pensioner Mackie still draws his pension. Mackie was found to have a balance against him in his canteen accounts. The War Office is not aware whether this money has been refunded, as it is not a case in which it would intervene, the debt not being a public or regimental debt, chargeable against the pensioner before his discharge from the Army. The only representation received from the pensioner

has been with reference to an application to assign his pension as security for his trial. This was refused, pensions not being assignable under any circumstances.

MINES REGULATION—THE ACCIDENT AT THE RHONDDA COLLIERY.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to a Resolution passed by the workmen at the Rhondda Colliery, in consequence of the deplorable accident there, to the effect that the practice of working extra time between the shifts is fraught with danger to the lives of the men; and, if so, whether the Inspectors of Mines can be empowered to prevent the practice?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; my attention has not been called to this Resolution; but I am informed by the Inspector that working extra time between shifts does not of itself involve any increased danger to the lives of the men. Inspectors have no power by law to interfere with the hours of employment of persons above the age of 16 years, and I do not think it would be wise to confer any such power upon them.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda) said, he desired to ask the Home Secretary a Question of which he had given him private Notice, Whether it was permissible, under the present Mines Act, that managers should employ large numbers of ordinary workmen at the particular time when shots were allowed to be fired; whether it was competent for young men, being sons of colliery owners, without practical experience or certificate of any kind, to act as agents for those collieries owned by their fathers; whether he intended in the new Mines Bill to make any provision for stopping such a condition of things, so that no such positions should be held except by persons duly qualified; and, whether he would direct an inquiry into the recent explosion in the Rhondda Valley?

MR. MATTHEWS said, he must enter his protest against a Minister being expected to answer two pages of Questions which were only placed in his hands as he entered the House. But he would try to answer the Questions. With

regard to the employment of men during the hours when shots were allowed to be fired, the hon. Member would find the law upon that point in the Mines Act of 1872, sec. 51, sub-sec. 8. The law as to the employment of agents was dealt with in Section 26. The new Mines Bill would contain no provision with regard to the employment of their sons by colliery owners; but provision would be made to insure competent supervision. As to the recent explosion, he had not only directed an inquiry, but had also directed counsel to appear on behalf of the Home Office.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)— VICTORIA PARK.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.), asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether it is the fact that a Memorial, signed by 30,000 inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets, was presented to Her Majesty in 1841, praying Her Majesty "to grant the inestimable benefit of the space" now included in Victoria Park "as a Royal Park;" whether, in reply to that Memorial, a Letter, dated 26th May, 1841, was addressed to Mr. Frederick Young, honorary Secretary of the Committee of the movement which resulted in that Memorial, by Lord Duncannon, on behalf of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, containing the following passage:—

"I have great pleasure in informing you that Her Majesty has expressed her entire approval of the steps which have been taken for complying with the memorial of the inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets for making a Royal Park in that populous district."

whether sec. 3, of 4 & 5 *Vic. c. 27*, provided for the purchase of certain lands therein specified, and for their conveyance to Her Majesty, Her heirs, and successors, and further provides that, when so conveyed, such lands shall ever thereafter be taken and be a royal park, by the name of Victoria Park; and whether Victoria Park is now a royal park; and if not, why not?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University) said, that the facts as to the formation of Victoria Park in 1841 were as stated in the Question; and there was no doubt that Victoria Park might, in that sense, now be termed a royal park.

BULGARIA—MR. CONDIE STEPHEN.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What was the official position of Mr. Condie Stephen towards Bulgaria, when the Earl of Idlesleigh gave him a letter of introduction to an eminent financial firm, in order to enable him to enter into negotiations with that firm for a loan to Bulgaria; whether it had already been decided that Mr. Stephen should not return to Bulgaria as Her Majesty's Representative when this letter was given to him; and, whether there is any precedent for a Representative of Her Majesty to a foreign country acting as Agent of that country in regard to the issue of a loan by a British financial firm; or of a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs giving to him a letter of introduction to a financial firm in London, in order to facilitate the negotiations of a loan, on his return home from the country where he represented Her Majesty?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Mr. Condie Stephen had no official position "towards Bulgaria" when the Earl of Idlesleigh gave him a letter of introduction to a financial firm. He had ceased to act as Her Majesty's Representative in Bulgaria on the return of Sir Frank Lascelles, who held that appointment. I do not know that there is any precedent for a Representative of Her Majesty in a foreign country acting as Agent for that country in regard to the issue of a loan by a British financial firm. As a matter of fact, Mr. Stephen was not such a Representative, and did not propose to act as Bulgarian Agent for a loan.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT) — DEFECTIVE WEAPONS — CUTLASSES AND SWORD-BAYONETS.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether it is the fact that the cutlass-bayonets recently complained of by the Admiralty were of foreign make, and were not, as was stated by the War Office, of English manufacture; whether he can explain how such an error was possible, and whether the system or a responsible official, and, if so, who is to blame for its having occurred; whether the weapons themselves bear no stamp

or mark which would indicate the places and the dates of manufacture and of issue; whether the discovery of the true history of the defective weapons is due, as stated by the Under Secretary of State for War, to an "effort of memory only;" whether no written records exist, or were ever made, on the subject; whether any other, and what, classes or descriptions of arms are without any such record, both stamped on the arms themselves and entered in the Record Book of the Department; and, what steps the Government intend to take to guard against the danger that would arise if the official information as to the number and history of weapons supplied to Her Majesty's Forces any longer depended upon the recollection of individual officials in the absence of proper official records?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): It is true that the cutlass-bayonets recently complained of by the Admiralty were of foreign make. The mistake, I understand, arose from the system of book-keeping which existed in the War Office in 1859, but which has long since been entirely altered. Under that system rifles were non-interchangeable; they had bayonets attached, but were only entered as rifles. The bayonets attached to them were regarded as part of the arm, and were not separately entered. This omission led to a larger proportion of sea-service sword-bayonets being assigned to home manufacturers than was correct. The weapons themselves originally bore view-marks indicating place and date of manufacture; these were erased in conversion. The discovery was due to the fact that when preparing information for the Cutlass Committee it appeared that more bayonets had been converted than were traceable as having been bought. The War Department books having been kept on improved principles since 1864, there was a difficulty in accounting for the matter; but a gentleman of long service in the Department was able to remember what the system was in 1859. The entry followed the custom of the day, which was well understood at the time. No written record regarding that custom is forthcoming. There is no reason to think that any other arms now in use or reserve for Her Majesty's Forces are in the same category as these cutlass-bayonets. The records are now well kept, and it is hardly possible to see

how a similar mistake can arise in future.

INLAND REVENUE—EXPERIMENT ON TOBACCO CULTIVATION.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, taking into consideration the great interest felt in, and the importance attaching to, the question of experimental tobacco cultivation in the United Kingdom, a statutory declaration will be accepted from tenant farmers and others intending to grow tobacco this season, instead of finding sureties in £100 per acre for the protection of the Revenue?

THE SECRETARY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am willing to accept the suggestion of my hon. Friend; and, after consultation with the Revenue authorities, I propose that the declaration should be in the following form—

“I, A B, tobacco cultivator at —, in the parish of — and county of —, declare that I will afford to the officials authorized by the Board of Inland Revenue free access at all times to the grounds and places used for the cultivation of tobacco, and that all tobacco grown by me shall be duly produced to the proper Revenue officer, to be charged with duty or otherwise disposed of in accordance with any regulations which may be issued relating to the growing of tobacco.”

This declaration must be made before a magistrate.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — SIR THOMAS G. ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WATERFORD.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Lord Lieutenant has removed Sir Thomas Grattan Esmonde from the office of High Sheriff of the county of Waterford, in consequence of any default or inefficiency in the discharge of the duties of the office, or of any circumstance unknown to the Lord Lieutenant at the time of the appointment; and, if not, for what cause has he been removed; and, whether Colonel Hillier, now appointed to succeed Sir Thomas Esmonde in the office of Sheriff of Waterford, is the same person who, when an officer of Constabulary, was mulcted in damages by a jury for an assault?

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): In answering this Question, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will state on what

grounds the appointment by Sir Thomas Esmonde of Mr. Strange, solicitor, as sub-Sheriff of the County Waterford was objectionable, as we gather it was from the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman last Tuesday night.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): That matter does not arise out of the present question. The reason for the removal of Sir Thomas Esmonde from the office of High Sheriff for the county of Waterford is shown in the letter of the Lords Justices which has been published. I do not know to what the last paragraph of the Question refers, unless it be to the fact that Colonel Hillier, when Deputy Inspector General of Constabulary, and in charge of police on the occasion of an anniversary, arrested the late Mr. John Rea, of Belfast, who took an action against him and obtained damages.

MR. SEXTON: Which he never paid.

ARMY (AMMUNITION)—BOXER MARTINI-HENRY CARTRIDGES.

COLONEL HUGHES - HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, If he will state why the Boxer Martini-Henry cartridge, which has proved a failure and has been condemned as such, is still being manufactured in large numbers and used for class firing on a very considerable scale; and, who was responsible for the continuance of their manufacture in the first instance after their failure had been absolutely assured?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (MR. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The rolled cartridge has not been condemned for purposes of practice. The Military Authorities have decided that for active service solid-drawn cartridges will alone be issued; but for practice ammunition there are advantages, both as regards cost and weight, in the rolled metal cartridge case which, in the Secretary of State's opinion, fully justify the continuance of its manufacture and issue.

HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORT FROM GREAT BRITAIN.

COLONEL HUGHES - HALLETT (Rochester) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will take into serious consideration the advisability of prohibiting for a time the export of horses from this country, at all events

until the requirements of the Artillery and Cavalry are fully satisfied?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Government do not consider that it would be advisable to prohibit, at the present time, the export of horses from this country. They have no reason to believe either that the present exportation has assumed serious dimensions, or that the Army is short of its authorized establishment of horses.

FOREIGN POWERS—ADVICE AND REMONSTRANCE.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the words attributed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a recent speech, in which he is stated to have said—

“There are times, and I am not sure we are far from those times, when it may be the duty of the Government to address either words of encouragement, or words of advice, or words of restraint, or words of remonstrance to other Powers,”

are correctly reported, and reflect the intentions of Her Majesty's Government; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will undertake to place Parliament in full possession of the reasons for any decision at which they may arrive, before addressing words of encouragement or words of remonstrance to Foreign Powers, which may involve this country in very serious responsibilities?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the words referred to are correctly reported; and I quite agree with him that there are times when it may be the duty of the Government of this country to address either words of encouragement, of advice, of restraint, or of remonstrance to other Powers; and it has been the practice, I apprehend, of every Government which has held Office in this country in its conduct of foreign affairs. The hon. Gentleman asks that Parliament may, in effect, previously be informed of the reasons influencing the Government in arriving at any decision before the Foreign Secretary addresses a despatch to a Minister abroad, or holds a conversation with a Foreign Diplomatist at home. I am unable to give the hon. Gentleman this assurance. The Govern-

ment are not prepared to divest themselves of their proper responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If the Government will interrupt the consideration of the Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), for the purpose of proceeding with any Bill relating to the Criminal Law of Ireland, or for any purpose except the transaction of necessary Business of Supply?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am unable to give the hon. Gentleman any information beyond that which I have already stated to the House—namely, that it is not the intention of the Government to allow any but urgent Business to interrupt the consideration of the Rules of Procedure, which are necessary to secure the orderly conduct of the Business of the House.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell the House when it is proposed to go into Committee of Supply upon the Supplementary Estimates?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will give an answer on Monday.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—TRIAL OF MR. JOHN DILLON AND OTHERS IN DUBLIN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question, of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether he can give the House any confirmation of the matter of a telegram just received from Dublin, to the effect that the jury at the State Trials have disagreed and been discharged, and that they were equally divided?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I think the “Dublin State Trials” is not a strictly correct description. I have received no confirmation of that telegram.

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—DISTURBANCES IN TONGA.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies a Question of which he had

given private Notice, Whether the Government had received any Report in confirmation of what appeared in last night's paper with regard to recent disturbances in Tonga; and, whether he could make any statement to the House on the subject?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead), in reply, said, that the Government had received no confirmation of the reports which appeared in last night's papers; but they had thought it expedient that steps should be immediately taken for sending the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific to report on what had taken place.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH—HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS

THE COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Lord ARTHUR HILL) reported Her Majesty's Answer to the Address, as followeth:—

I have received with great satisfaction your loyal and dutiful Address.

I gladly avail Myself of your advice and assistance in considering the important matters which will be brought before you, and I confidently hope that the results of your deliberations will not fail to conduce to the peace and happiness of My People in all parts of My Empire.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question,

“That, at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, ‘That the Question be now put.’ Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

“When the Motion ‘That the Question be now put,’ has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be

now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.

“Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members.”—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.), in moving as an Amendment, in Rule 1, line 1, after the word “That,” to insert the words “When Mr. Speaker is in the Chair,” said, I rise, Sir, for the purpose of moving the first Amendment which appears in my name on the Paper, and I am anxious to state the reasons which induce me to do so. I am afraid that the adoption of the new Rules as they now stand will be likely to injure the character of this House and the character of our Committees. It is much more likely to injure the character of the House when the Chairman is in the Chair than when the Speaker presides, and, therefore, I maintain that these Rules should not be applied in the absence of the Speaker. The character of a Member appointed to the office of Speaker, and of one appointed Chairman of Committees, differs in many most important particulars. When the Speaker is appointed, he may have been a Party man, and even a strong Party man; but this rule has always been observed—in his future career the Speaker is not supposed to enter again into the arena of Party politics, and when he retires from the Chair he goes to a milder atmosphere, where Party devices are not supposed to be particularly strong. Consequently, the Speaker, to a great extent, ceases to be a Party man the moment he receives his appointment. That is not the case with the Chairman of Committees. He is generally a gentleman who may be considered to be an aspirant to Cabinet rank. Of the five Chairmen whom I recollect, one had held in a previous Government the position of Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, two others afterwards became Cabinet Ministers, and the other two, although at the present moment they are not Cabinet Ministers, when their Party comes into power again, will probably both of them

fairly expect to be included in the Ministry. When I speak of Chairmen of Committees as Party men, I have no wish to reflect on their Parliamentary character; but I merely say that this House cannot be in the same position when under the guidance of severe and stringent Rules enforced by a Chairman who is a Party man as it would be under the presidency of the Speaker, who is supposed to leave all Party considerations behind him when he is promoted to that position. The fact that Chairmen of Committees have aspirations to Cabinet rank places them in a different category from the Speaker. That is one reason why I think the immense power proposed to be given under the New Rule should not be given to the Chairman of Committees. There is, however, another reason for the selection of the Chairman of Committees—namely, that he may not have got a safe seat. Every Cabinet Minister has to stand re-election, but the Chairman of Committees is often appointed by his Party, because he has not got a safe seat, and his Party would not like to subject him to the test of a re-election. There was one occasion when each Party had a Chairman, and both sat for the same seat, and it was quite a toss-up which of the two was likely to succeed in an election. Now, I maintain that a Member who hopes to be a Cabinet Minister, and who has not got a safe seat, is a man who is practically in the hands of his Party when that Party happens to be in power. Therefore, these powers, however severe they may be in the hands of the Speaker, are likely to be more severely administered in the hands of a Chairman of Committees. Then, again, I have another reason. The Speaker is appointed after full notice and great deliberation. There is not much show in the House of Commons; but whatever there is surrounds the Speaker. We have every guarantee for publicity in the manner and method of his appointment, and every person has an opportunity of challenging that appointment. Contrast that with the manner in which the Chairman of Committees is appointed. I have been present at the opening of more than one Parliament, and on each occasion a Chairman has been appointed; but I have never known, or been made aware, when the appointment was made. I have

made some inquiry on this subject, and I am told that he is not appointed at all. That is wrong, I know; but there is a general impression among Members—a sort of legend—that he is appointed in this way—On the second night of the Session Members have Bills down on the Paper, and some of them have to go through the antiquated form of being introduced in Committee before they can be read a first time. Consequently, on the second night of the Session, the Speaker is moved out of the Chair for the first time, and whoever is put in the place of the Speaker becomes the Chairman of Committees. [Mr. DILLWYN: Hear, hear!] I am glad that the hon. Member endorses that statement, and I think it ought to be generally known. I contend that the man who is appointed in this way is not a man to whom we ought to entrust this enormous power. There is a still further reason. The Chairman of Committees has a duplicate capacity. He not only presides here when the Speaker is out of the Chair, but he has an enormous amount of work to do in connection with Private Bill legislation, and in regulating Procedure in regard to Private Bills. A Chairman of Committees has not only the power of controlling the House when in Committee, but he is also appointed for his knowledge of Private Bill legislation. It frequently happens that when the House goes into Committee the regular Chairman of Committees is not in his place, and the Speaker is replaced by some other Member of the House. Now, Sir, when you leave the Chair you are replaced by an efficient substitute; but who replaces the Chairman of Committees when he leaves the Chair? He is generally replaced by some great Party man who sits on the Treasury Bench, and sometimes, perhaps, out of compliment, by a Member who sits on the Front Opposition Bench, from whom I am afraid the minority would have still less to expect than from a Member of the Government. Who is to replace the Chairman of Committees when he is sick, or absent in consequence of having to attend to the Private Business of the House? The absence of the Speaker is most unfrequent; it rarely occurs, Sir, that your place is supplied by the Deputy Chairman; but the absence of the Chairman of Committees is much more frequent, and I think the House

ought to pause before it places in the hands of any substitute, who is a mere Party man, this enormous power. I would remind the House that my Amendment is not in favour of no closure at all; but what I am contending is that the existing closure by two-thirds should not be superseded by closure by a mere majority. When we are in Committee I should prefer no closure at all; but I maintain that when in Committee, if we are to have this severe and stringent Rule, a bare majority should not be able to out-vote the minority and put them to silence. I have pointed out the difference between the Speaker of the House and the Chairman of Committees. Let me say a few words on the matters that are brought before the House in Committee, as compared with those which are before the House when the Speaker is in the Chair. The work in Committees may be practically divided into two parts—namely, the Votes in Supply, and the clauses of Public Bills. That does not comprise all the work of Committees, but it does include the larger portion of it. Now, I think it is most invidious that we should have these regulations with regard to clôture when in Committee of Supply, and I will give my reasons. In the first place, instead of Members speaking too much, or paying too much attention to Supply, it is well known that they do not devote sufficient attention to it. If Members would attend more regularly and pay more attention to the work in Supply, I believe that they would be able to save the country a large amount of money. There is nothing that officials of the Government are more afraid of than the discussion of increased expenditure in the House of Commons. What makes at the present moment the control of the House of Commons so efficient in Committee of Supply, is the way in which the Departments have prepared the Estimates. The Departments are afraid to put an additional Estimate upon the Votes. They know how new items will be challenged, and they are positively timid in putting them in. But when an expenditure has gone on for a few years the officers of the Department know that the House of Commons will confirm the Vote year after year, although it might have been struck off without detriment to the Public Service. In Committee of Supply a Member gets up and asks a question,

and having directed attention to an unsatisfactory Vote, it is generally found that it is struck off next year. How much more satisfactory would it not be to Departments generally, and how thankful the Northern Lights Commissioners in particular would be, if they could have their dinner bill discussed quietly anywhere, rather than in Committee of Supply. I fail to see how it will be possible to protect the expenditure of public money by the clôture. It is bad enough to have to vote away the public money at 1 o'clock in the morning; but to say that by a bare majority you are to put the clôture into effect will, I think, make the ratepayers not only indignant, but impatient of taxation. It has been said that some members have constantly over-discussed the Estimates. I do not say for a moment that there has not been some abuse of Supply, and an abuse which I am anxious to guard against. But these Rules do not deal with them. The abuse of Supply is long speeches which shut out other Members, and if we were to adopt a 10 minutes' rule, limiting the length of speeches, I think a great deal of good would be done; but by adopting the clôture you will only prevent practical men from being heard. How will you work the clôture? If there has been too much discussion upon one Vote, are you to close all discussion upon the remaining Votes during the rest of the evening? What are you going to do next? Are you going to clôture all the other Votes? If at the end of the evening you say "We will now apply the clôture, and having passed Vote 2 we will now pass Votes 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7." Without any debate at all, you will be doing great injury to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for people will be unwilling to pay taxes, and an enormous injury will be done to the Public Service. I think it is foolish that we should attempt to keep on the Standing Orders of the House a Rule that can only work injuriously. Let me mention a case in which it was alleged that there was an obstruction in Supply. I refer to the Volunteer Vote. Serious objection was taken to the passing of that Vote, and the Government said that it was a great shame that after the Vote had been discussed for two or three hours, it should not have been passed. The opponents of the Vote were anxious to state their reasons against it,

[*Fourth Night.*]

and they considered that it was hard upon them to have to state their reasons at 2 o'clock in the morning when they could not be reported. The objections came from the Irish Members; English Members were not likely to oppose the Volunteer Vote. In consequence of the discussion which took place, so violent were the objections taken to the Vote that it would have been absolutely impolitic to have stopped the discussion. Then it is said that the Irish Members took up too much time over the Constabulary Vote. Now the Constabulary Vote means the whole question of the Government of Ireland. It is said that the defection of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) had reference to the Constabulary or some kindred subject in Ireland, so that this is a matter of the most vital importance, and even if we take up one or two days in discussing a question of such enormous importance, surely it is far better that we should be allowed to speak at length, than that majority should place us under their control, and not only outvote us, but close our mouths. I do not know who is responsible for the Estimates. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for the money; but I do not know whether the First Lord of the Treasury is responsible for the management of the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has reminded us, that on one occasion after the House of Commons had made a protracted fight upon a Vote of £30,000 or £40,000, a number of Votes involving millions were passed without comment. I believe that the House would Vote money away freely, if hon. Members were allowed to have their way. I have spoken of the impolicy of imposing this clôtüre upon the Estimates. I should like to say one or two words as to the impolicy of having the clôtüre enforced when the House is in Committee upon Public Bills. I will separate the Public Bills into two classes—English, Scotch, and Imperial Bills, and Coercion Bills for Ireland. In regard to the first class, it is rare indeed that there is anything approaching Obstruction in this House. It was certainly the fact that one clause of the Mutiny Bill was hotly contested by the minority—a small minority, at the commencement of the discussion; but which became a large majority at

the end of a few days, and rendered it necessary for the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) to reinforce his big battalions. It was owing to the staunch manner in which a small number of Members sitting on this side of the House held out for two or three days that they were enabled eventually to abolish flogging in the Army. And what was the reason? It was because the speeches made in this House were published in the papers, and public opinion was brought to bear upon hon. Members and upon the Government, so that at length the Government had to consent to the abolition of flogging. If you had had the clôtüre at that time, the Government would have been able to silence the minority, and, at the present moment, the Mutiny Act would probably have remained unchanged, and that horrible punishment would still have existed in the British Army. Now, I come to another point, in regard to which I acknowledge that there was something which our opponents were justified in calling Obstruction. I refer to the category of Bills called Criminal Law Amendment Bills, but which we call Coercion Bills. In that case, I admit that the whole of the Irish Members opposed such Bills strongly and determinedly. You might even say that we did so in a manner which you call Obstruction; but what does it amount to? It means one nation governing another—the English nation governing the Irish nation, and the Irish nation protesting against having coercion applied to them, and protesting, through their Members, as loudly as they can against it. On such occasions, what is it that engages the attention of the House? You are simply passing a law which you know to be disliked and hated by nine-tenths of the Irish Members; but, if you had this Rule of Closure, you would not allow them to talk or protest against it. If you had stuck to your old Rule with a two-thirds majority, it would be necessary to secure the votes of two-thirds of the English Members before the clôtüre could be enforced. Upon our part, it would be necessary to bring up our 86 Members, including the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), as an Irish Member—from the Bar in Dublin, from their farms, and, in order to

obtain a full muster, it would be necessary even then to go to the Colonies and to the United States, where there are some Irishmen who occasionally like to hear the voice of an Irish Representative. It would require 160 Members at least to make up the two-thirds which would be necessary to apply the *clôture*, and the only question to be decided would be whether the Irish Members should be allowed to talk for another day or two upon a matter of the utmost interest to the Irish people. You are going to say—"We will not only strike you with a Coercion Bill, but we will muzzle you, and prevent you from being heard." I have ventured to bring these questions before the House. I have pointed out that there is an essential difference between applying the *Clôture* Rule in the Whole House when the Speaker is in the Chair and applying it in Committee when the Chairman of Ways and Means is presiding. I am willing to admit that there ought to be some restriction upon the debates in Committee; but I think it ought to be levelled against long speeches. I entreat the Government to reconsider their position, and at least to say, if they insist upon having this *Clôture* Rule at all, that it shall only be put in force by a two-thirds majority.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, after the word "That," to insert the words "when Mr. Speaker is in the Chair."
—(Colonel Nolan.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I wish to point out that the hon. and gallant Member is in error in supposing that there is a two-thirds closure at the present time. There is a closure at the present moment in existence which gives to the Chairman of Committees precisely the same powers as those possessed by the Speaker. The hon. Member seems to think the Rule gives him a power which he does not possess. Allow me to read the Rule. It is as follows:—

"That when it shall appear to Mr. Speaker or to the Chairman of Ways and Means in a Committee of the Whole House during any debate that the subject has been adequately discussed, and that it is the evident sense of the House or of the Committee that the ques-

tion be now put, he may so inform the House or the Committee."

So that at present, therefore, there exists a power of enforcing the closure by the Chairman in Committee, without any Motion being made by a Member, and all that it is intended to do by this Rule is to give the Chairman that power on the Motion of a Member. It is desirable that the Chairman should have, with regard to a Private Bill in Committee, the same power which he now possesses in the case of a Public Bill of declaring that in his opinion the discussion has gone far enough. If he has that power now, it does not seem to me that the proposed New Rule will do more than continue it, subject to the alteration we propose. I do not hesitate to say that a measure which restricted the power of closure to the Speaker alone would be a measure that would fail altogether in accomplishing the object we have in view—namely, to give to the House and to a Committee of the House, under all circumstances and all conditions, the power of regulating and of controlling its own procedure. The hon. and gallant Member has suggested that, under the Rule as framed, it would be possible for the Government of the day to rush a measure of the highest importance through the House with great rapidity and without adequate debate being had, and that material injury might be inflicted upon the State by the absence of discussion. But, Sir, that has not been the case hitherto. Notwithstanding the fact that the power of the closure had vested in the Chairman in Committee for now some considerable time, none of the ills which the hon. and gallant Member forbodes in the future have happened in the past, and no suggestion has been made that measures have not recently been adequately discussed. Even the hon. and gallant Member himself has admitted that there has been excessive and prolonged discussion from time to time upon Estimates of a comparatively unimportant character, and that an item involving the sum of £30,000 or £40,000 has been discussed for several hours, while, on the other hand, millions have been voted in a few minutes. The hon. and gallant Member in making that statement could not have furnished me with a better or stronger argument in favour of some system of control being exercised over these dis-

[Fourth Night.]

cussions, having regard to the comparative importance of the subject under consideration. No Government, no Member of this House, and no Committee would ever sanction a mode of dealing with Public Business of great importance otherwise than with the utmost consideration in relation to the importance of the subject being dealt with; and I do not think that the hon. and gallant Member need be under any apprehension that in the future this House will move too fast under any Rules which we may adopt for our own guidance, or that any Ministry will dare to push forward, without adequate discussion, important measures which involve considerations of the highest importance, and are resisted by a considerable or even by a small minority. I do not think any Minister would be prepared to push forward proposals of this kind so as to prevent that adequate discussion which the circumstances of the case would demand. The hon. and gallant Gentleman will, I am sure, excuse me, and will believe that I am not treating him with any want of respect, if I fail to answer him at the length with which he has himself addressed the House. I am anxious that we should proceed as rapidly as possible with the consideration of these Rules. The question before us is this—Does the House desire to prevent the reasonably rapid, but not too rapid, transaction of its Business in Committee? Is it determined to leave Obstruction in full force and vigour, so that the Business of the country cannot be conducted by reason of the delay which occurs in Committee? Is it determined that in circumstances such as the hon. and gallant gentleman has referred to of prolonged discussion over an unimportant Vote shall prevent adequate discussion on the most important Votes the House can entertain? If we do not desire that such should be the case, then we must take care not to leave all the powers of Obstruction in full force and vigour. It is most undesirable that a discussion on the amount to be voted for the Queen's Plates in Ireland should occupy several hours, and that £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 should be voted in a few minutes. These are considerations which the House must be prepared to deal with at once, if they really desire to put a check upon unnecessary pro-

lixity, which is nothing less than obstruction and a desire to prevent the Business of the country from going forward. In those circumstances I believe that the House will be prepared to maintain the Rule which now exists, and to continue to the Chairman the same power which he now exercises.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I must say that I think the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) has made out a very strong case for the Amendment he asks the House to adopt. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury rather excused himself from following the hon. and gallant Gentleman in the arguments which he has put forward. I do not know whether his unwillingness to follow the hon. and gallant Gentleman was due to the strength of the case and the feeling that it was impossible to reply to the arguments which have been adduced. Certainly the case made out is a strong one. During the time the old Closure Rule has been in existence there has not been a single attempt or desire on the part of any Chairman of Committees to apply the *clôture*; so that, as far as experience goes, there has been no need for the *clôture* in the minds of the different Chairmen during the years which have gone by, and I think the Government ought to have shown some reason for continuing what is evidently an unnecessary reason for checking and stopping adequate debate in Committee. I entirely agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman that the *clôture* is not a desirable or a useful weapon for the purpose of facilitating the Business of the House or of Committee, because from the nature of the case it would take more time to repeatedly enforce the closure in Committee than it would to allow the free discussion of a subject. Debates in Committee frequently turn upon details, and an indignant minority, feeling that they had been unfairly treated, would be able to multiply the questions raised in Committee indefinitely, and you will find that if you use the closure weapon you will be in a worse position than you were before it was used. This has evidently been the opinion of the distinguished Gentlemen who have filled the Chair since the Closure Rule was passed. It has never been used in Committee, nor has any anxiety been expressed to

apply it that is contrary to the Procedure in the Whole House, because the *clôture* has been applied twice, and the Speaker has been anxious to use it on other occasions, but has been restrained, because there was not the necessary majority to enforce it. In the course of a debate I have often seen important questions unravelled by a speaker which would not have been unravelled if there had been any haste to close the debate under the Rule which is now proposed for our adoption. It must be recollected that the New Rule will not be put in force by the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, but it will be necessary to put it in force on the initiative of some Member of the House. That is a very different state of affairs. Consequently we may have hon. Members endeavouring to enforce the closure who do not possess that knowledge of the exigencies of debate as is necessary in dealing with a Rule like this in the midst of numerous technicalities. I have an Amendment down on the Paper later on to except the proceedings on Votes in Supply from the operation of the Rule, which I shall certainly press if the House should reject the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member. I shall not refer to that subject now; but I could, if it were necessary, enlarge on the inadvisability of permitting a Government to have the power of stopping debate on questions connected with the supply of money to the Crown. On the whole I think the proposal which has been made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman is one which may be very fairly accepted by the Government, especially in view of the strong case he has made and the fact that this closure power has never been used in Committee since the passing of the original Rule, and that therefore it may be reasonably supposed that there is no necessity for it.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I desire to say a few words in support of the Amendment. I entertain very great respect for the Chair so far as the Speaker of this House is concerned; and I have no doubt that in conferring this power upon the right hon. Gentleman by these Rules, he will be guided in exercising it by that character for common sense and fair play which he very justly bears. I also believe that the increased power which the Speaker

will be entrusted with will be exercised with a due appreciation of the responsibility placed on him by the House. But the case is different with the Chairman of Committees, who would not exercise his power in a judicial character; but would be made by the action of the Government a political partizan. We have confidence in the Speaker, because we know that when he rules he rules with a judicial mind, and acts as the interpreter of the will of the House. I congratulate myself that I have not yet felt the weight of the Speaker's heavy hand. But, however much confidence I may have in the Speaker, I do not think I should be justified in reposing the same amount of confidence in the Chairman of Committees for the reasons which have already been stated by my hon. and gallant Friend. In Committee of Supply, hon. Members not only have the opportunity of pointing out irregularities in the administration of Departments; but they have also the power of exposing the tyranny of officials in the various parts of Her Majesty's Dominions. We have, on more than one occasion, taken advantage of the opportunity afforded to us by discussing the salaries of officials in connection with the Administration and Government of Ireland, to point out the tyranny of those officials. It would be to the advantage of the Government, and perhaps it would be their desire, whether Liberals or Tories, to shut up and close any discussion that might arise on the evil acts of any official in Ireland, from Dublin Castle down to the lowest policeman. Freedom of debate is a matter of the highest importance, whether it be in Committee of Supply or in the full House. During the debates which took place in 1882, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Brighton (Mr. Marriott) said he had heard it stated that if there had been freedom of debate in America the Civil War would have been avoided. I do not think we have any reason to apprehend civil war in this country; we are at peace with all the world; but I do think that if discussions on the conduct of officials in Ireland are restricted in any way, the conduct of those officials would very quickly drive that country into a state of civil war. The question of Obstruction has been very frequently referred to, not only in discussing the general question, but

also in the speeches of my hon. and gallant Friend and my hon. Friend the Member for the city of Cork (Mr. Parnell). Obstruction will continue to be alluded to during the whole discussion of the Rules of Procedure, and I have to endorse the statement made by the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) yesterday, when pointing to the action and conduct of hon. Members on this side of the House below the Gangway, he said it was evident that the policy of Obstruction had been abandoned by hon. Members who came from Ireland. Obstruction has had its day, and it has now passed away. It has served its purpose, and no man would now be so foolish as to think of resorting to that rusty, played out, and inefficient weapon. The right hon. Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) said, a few days ago, that when he first entered this House it was the object and the ambition of a young Member to catch the ear of the House, and to conciliate the House. I believe that our Predecessors in the representation of Ireland did secure the ear of the House. They endeavoured to conciliate the House, but to what purpose? The claims of Ireland were ignored, and it was found necessary to adopt other means. I am happy to say that those means were successful, and that they not only caught the ear of the House, but the ear of the whole world. That policy has now had its day, and has served its purpose; and I defy any hon. Member to say that for the past year or two he has witnessed any act of deliberate obstruction of the Business of this House. I listened carefully to the statement of my hon. and gallant Friend, and also to the attempt to reply to it which was made by the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman altogether failed to grapple with the arguments of my hon. and gallant Friend. I think it would be a fatal mistake, in the proper discussion of the Estimates, and the proper conduct of the Business of this House, if any power, such as that proposed to be conferred on the Speaker, were also conferred on the Chairman of Committees, who is not removed from the influence of the Government, and who may possibly be a strong political partizan. Such a step would destroy the confidence which the country now reposes in the management of the Business of this

House. There was an argument used by the First Lord of the Treasury with regard to Queen's Plates in Ireland, in which I beg entirely to differ from him as to the time the discussion lasted. But what does it prove? The right hon. Gentleman says that millions were subsequently voted, with little or no discussion, for the Army and Navy. It only shows that the House is like the celebrated Nasmyth hammer; it is capable of crushing a large amount of solid metal, and, yet, at the same time, is so much under control that it will descend upon an egg without breaking the shell. This House represents that famous machine, and while it is capable of voting immense sums of money for the proper conduct of the affairs of the nation, it will, at the same time, quarrel over the improper expenditure of sixpence. It is this peculiar character of the House of Commons that has gained for it the confidence of the English people; and now, by a new Rule of Procedure, you are proposing to destroy that confidence which has hitherto been its greatest strength. For these reasons I have much pleasure in supporting the Amendment of my hon. and gallant Friend.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Sir, the most dangerous feature in connection with the threatened application of the closure presents itself in the case of the Votes in Committee of Supply; because it is really then that the Members of this House run the most serious danger of having their rights interfered with. The most important Business in the course of the year is the consideration of the Budget. The Budget of the coming year promises to be more than usually interesting; it is one which will be very vigorously fought, and nothing would be easier than for the Government to obtain the consent of the Chairman of Committees, whoever he may be, for the purpose of entering into a conspiracy to silence those who stand up to criticize the Budget. We know that it is impossible at the present time to get the Chairman of Committees to engage in any conspiracy of the kind; because the Gentleman at present in the Office occupies a somewhat peculiar position. But I have known cases where the Chairman has been audibly prompted to use his authority to compel Members to resume their seats. I have seen as many

as three or four Members of the House occupying the Chair in the course of a single sitting, and that, Sir, exposes Members to considerable risk; because a Member moved hap-hazard into the Chair might easily be induced to consent to the application of the closure, if that application were made by a Leader of his own Party; and, inasmuch as he would be in the Chair for a short time only, Members who were anxious to continue the discussion would have no possible redress. It is extremely unreasonable to insist that the Chairman should possess this power. There is no right which is more valuable in this House than that of the discussion at great length of questions in Committee of Supply. There has been a great tendency on the part of the Government to come down and ask for large Votes on account, sometimes to the amount of £10,000,000, which they obtain practically without discussion. Well, Sir, nothing could be easier for the Government to arrange a series of Votes of £10,000,000 each and get them, and then when we want to discuss the details, to say—"Oh, it is of no use to discuss them now;" whereupon the Chairman, drawing a logical inference from the position, will declare that it is useless to discuss the question any longer, and so terminate the debate. The Government of the day could thus silence discussion in this House upon the most important Business on which we come here. These, Sir, are the considerations on which I support the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan), who I hope will press its acceptance upon the House as far as possible.

MR. MAHONY (Meath, N.): Sir, it is very difficult for us to gauge the manner in which the Government will enforce the closure, and we can only do so by the remarks which, from time to time, fall from the Treasury Bench. I take it, from the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, that the Government would be very adverse to the discussion of the Votes of comparatively small sums of money. If I am right in my recollection, the Queen's Plates have been objected to by Members of this House on grounds of principle—the very reasonable one, that public money ought not to be expended on horse racing. But the right hon.

Gentleman complained that not only a large portion of time had been spent on the question of these Plates, but that a short time had been spent on the Army Estimates. That, however, is a ground of complaint which the Government will be able to remove at a future time. By your ruling of last Thursday, Sir, it would be exceedingly difficult for Members to bring forward matters for discussion, however important they might be; but in future their opportunities would be greatly restricted, if not altogether done away with. We must not judge of the importance of a principle by the smallness of the Vote in which it is contained; there is no relation between the two; and, therefore, on the grounds I have stated, I shall support the Amendment of my hon. and gallant Friend.

MR. MOLLOY (King's County, Birr): Sir, it was stated in the course of the general discussion that the object of the Rule was that the Speaker should share the responsibility with the Chairman, and that statement carried great weight with the House. But the right hon. Gentleman opposite has to-night given us a totally different explanation. Under the New Rule the Chairman can put the closure in operation, which means that the Government will come down with the Estimates, which always give rise to opposition in the House, and in order to prevent continued opposition, the Chairman will get a hint to make a Motion for the closure. It seems to me that we are transferring the power of the closure from the Chair to the Government of the day. We are adopting the American system; I admit we are only beginning it; but the moment you give the Party in Office the power of moving the "Previous Question," it will be impossible to stop at this point. Again, whenever the Chairman has left the Chair, the Vice Chairman has been taken from the Government Bench; he has never been a private Member of the House, and thus we have a man who owes his appointment to political considerations; and so the Minister in charge of the Estimates is often the very man who shall give the hint to the Chairman to close discussion. I do not believe this Rule will be of any more use to the House than the Rules now in existence; but it will, in time, put it in the power of the Minister, through the Chairman,

[Fourth Night.]

to put an end to all discussion on the Estimates. The First Lord of the Treasury has given us the true explanation of the Rule to-night. What we are going to vote for on this Amendment is, the question whether we shall place the power of the *clôture* in the hands of Ministers, or leave it in the hands of the Speaker; and, that being so, I shall support the proposal of my hon. and gallant Friend.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 82; Noes 204; Majority 122.—(Div. List, No. 22.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Sir, I rise to move, as an Amendment, the omission from this Resolution of the words "at any time" in line 1. After much contemplation and study, I have not been able to make out why these mysterious words should appear in the Resolution. There is a summary aspect about this Rule as compared with the Old Rule, which was that, after a question had been proposed, Motion might be made, with the consent of the Chair previously obtained, "That the Question be now put." I must direct the attention of the House to the fact that, on the Rule as it now stands, Motion may be made before there has been any debate on a Question at all. A Minister may come down to the House, and say that Lord Salisbury had declared war against Russia, that he wanted so much money at once, and he may ask and obtain leave of the Speaker to the making of a Motion, "That the Question be now put," before there has been a word of debate. Sir, I ask what is the meaning of these words; what is the meaning of this arbitrary change in the direction of the summary and abrupt aspect of the Rule which now presents itself as compared with the Old Rule? The Government have swept away the three limitations which were in the Old Rule; they have got rid of the reference to the Speaker, of the necessity that any debate whatever should take place, and of the necessity that the subject should be adequately discussed, and that that should be the evident sense of the House. By the adoption of this Rule as it stands, you will have an instrument of such an arbitrary and summary character as I venture to say the Leader of no other Legislative Assembly has in his hands for checking debate, and pre-

venting any sort of debate whatever, if it seems fit to the Minister of the day. I shall be glad to have an answer from the Government to this question—What is their motive in putting in these words? Do they attach any importance to the words; and, if so, what is the extent of the importance they attach to them? In fact, I should like Her Majesty's Government to make a clean breast of it, if there is anything lurking behind these words. I am inclined to think, from the point of view of the Government, that, unless there is some hidden and deeply written intention in the introduction of the words, it would be better to leave them out until the matter has been fully considered, or until we see how far they carry us. Surely, it cannot be the intention of the Government that a Minister of the day, in Committee of Supply, or before any consideration or discussion of a Bill has taken place, is to ask the House to agree to a Motion "That the Question be now put." If that is not the intention of the Government, why are the words here? The right hon. Gentleman will, I am sure, admit that the summary character of the Rule has enormously enhanced its claim to the scrutiny of the House; and I hope he will agree to the Motion which I now beg to move.

Amendment proposed, in line 1 to leave out the words "at any time."—(Mr. Parnell.)

Question proposed, "That the words 'at any time' stand part of the Question."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) Strand, Westminster): Sir, the hon. Member has asked me to make a clean breast with regard to these words. If the hon. Member will again look at the Rule, I think he will agree in the judgment I have formed—namely, that the Rule will be stronger without the words than with them. The hon. Gentleman seems to think that the aim of the Rule is to prevent discussion; but, Sir, that is not so; its aim is to secure adequate discussion of all Business that may be brought before the House. The words which are the subject of the hon. Member's Amendment are of so little importance, from our point of view, that we are quite ready to accept the proposal to strike them out.

Mr. Molloy

MR. MOLLOY (King's County, Birr): As the right hon. Gentleman has stated his willingness to agree to the Amendment of my hon. Friend, and as he says that the Clause will be stronger for the omission of the words "at any time," I think he ought logically to go farther, and admit some such words as I propose to move in an Amendment when the proper place is reached.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of discussing that Amendment when it is reached.

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): If we omit these words, it would rather imply that the Motion must be made immediately after the Question has been put, or not at all. I therefore hope the Government will not give way on this point.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): The right hon. Gentleman has made "a clean breast of it" by saying that there is no virtue in these words. It would be a great pity if we did not adopt reasonable precaution, however, to prevent a result which we all regard with some amount of alarm. I, therefore, suggest to the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether it would not be advisable to introduce some modification of the words which would not militate at all against the efficacy of the Rule. I suggest that the words "at a reasonable time," would, at any rate, give us the assurance that discussion would not be improperly burked before it had reached a reasonable stage.

MR. PARNELL: Sir, I ask if the hon. Member for Camborne is in Order in discussing a specific Amendment of his own, when the Government have assented to the Amendment before the Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: It has to be decided by the House whether the words "at any time" shall stand part of the Rule.

Question put and *negatived*.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The Amendment which I now rise to move is one of a series of Amendments consequential upon the adoption of that which has just been agreed to by the House; and, Sir, the adoption of the last Amendment immeasurably strengthens the grounds of the claim I make for each of the subsequent Amendments which it will be my duty to press upon the House. I propose to insert after "Ques-

tion" the words, "other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland." As the Rule now stands, as has been pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, it would be possible for a Minister to come down and move the Second Reading of a Bill of the nature of the Crimes Act. If that is moved, and the Motion is put from the Chair, "that the Bill be now read a second time," it would be possible for him to claim (as he would claim, and as has always been claimed with reference to such Acts for Ireland) urgency, and he would be able to get up and make the Motion "That the Question be now put." In that way it would be possible for him to carry the Second Reading of a Coercion Bill without debate. The House will perceive that the Rule constitutes a very startling and alarming alteration of Procedure. Under the old system it was necessary that the sense of the House should be manifest; and it was also necessary that the Speaker should be of opinion that the question had been adequately discussed. We have here nothing about the sense of the House, and there is not a word about adequate discussion. We may have to look forward to a time of great public excitement in this country, when Ministers may think it their absolute duty to get Acts of Coercion through the House without delay; and it used to be the custom to pass Coercion Bills through both Houses of Parliament in a single day under a suspension of the Standing Orders. That has not been the case since the Ballot Act, and other Acts connected therewith, have returned to this House more popular and more democratic Members. What you do now, is to put it absolutely in the power of Ministers controlling the majority to carry the second reading of a Coercion Act after a single night's discussion, without its being in the power of anyone to put forward any arguments against the Bill—it will leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Minister of the day. That, Sir, is a result which we are bound very strongly to protest against. The right hon. Gentleman says it is not the intention to use this Rule in an arbitrary way. But, Sir, the road to a certain place is paved with good intentions, and we know very well what becomes of the good intentions of

Ministers speaking in quiet times, from which we may judge what will become of such intentions in times when Ministers lose their heads and propose that Bills should be carried in the excitement of the moment. We should fail in our duty if we were not to protest strongly against the possibility of such a contingency as I have suggested. Ministers are always exceedingly anxious to get Coercion Acts through the House rapidly. I have never known a Minister having a Coercion Bill in hand who did not plead that the powers under the Bill should be given to him without an hour's delay. But under the Rule, as it now exists, 85 Members who come here pledged to oppose coercion for Ireland, with 200 English Liberal Members on these Benches pledged also to oppose coercion, and with many Conservative Members, followers, and supporters of Her Majesty's Government pledged also to oppose coercion for Ireland, I ask if it is not right that we should test the opinion of the House in regard to this matter? While we have time, ought we not to insert some safeguards in this Rule, which will prevent a Minister having charge of a Coercion Bill acting in an arbitrary fashion, and preventing that due discussion which, above all things, is necessary and desirable in the case of such measures? Do the Government object to some limitation of this Rule? It will be admitted that when the Irish measure is introduced it will be of an exceptional nature. I do not intend to anticipate what its nature will be; but how do you suppose the Irish Members and English Liberal Members will feel, if one of the first examples of the application of this Rule is its arbitrary exercise for the prevention of discussion on a measure for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland? Do you think we shall believe we have been fairly treated under the circumstances? Do you think it is the way to make your Business progress, that you should use these weapons of closure against the Irish people and their Representatives, who are vainly struggling to mitigate the rigorous application of coercion to Ireland? I think we have a strong case that the Government should accept this Amendment, which contemplates measures of an extreme nature with regard to Ire-

Mr. Parnell

land. If they do not, their steps will be haunted throughout the rest of the discussion upon this Rule, and subsequent Rules, by the belief on the part of Irish Members that the Government have obtained the Rule for the certain purpose alone of hurriedly carrying through the House the approaching measure of coercion for Ireland. If that is not your intention—if you only desire in the hands of the Leader of the House the means of facilitating the general public Business of the nation, then why do you not agree to this very reasonable proposal? Why not make an exception in the case of such a measure as I have indicated? Is it not desirable that there should be free discussion, above all things, of a measure of coercion? I ask you to insert this safeguard then, to provide that under no temptation whatever shall it be possible for the majority of the House, or the Minister, or the Chair, in the excitement of the moment to prevent Members from Ireland fully and freely stating their views in opposition to coercive measures for their country. I think the grounds for excepting coercive measures for Ireland from this Rule are of unexampled strength. It is the belief of some that the aim of the Government is to obtain this stringent first Rule and then drop all the other Rules. We shall be confronted with your new and keen weapon, and you will proceed with your congenial policy of coercion. I beg to move to insert after the word "Question" in line 1—

"Other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland."

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the words "other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has recognized that these Rules were brought forward to secure the better conduct of the Business of the House, and yet he has brought forward this Amendment in favour of which he has not adduced anything that can be regarded as a reasonable argu-

ment. Why should this House decline to apply such Rules to proposals for strengthening the Criminal Law in Ireland while they are made applicable to proposals for strengthening the Criminal Law of England, Scotland, or Wales, or to any other proposals that require to be fully and freely discussed? The hon. Member (Mr. Parnell) has answered his own argument, for he has mentioned that there are 85 hon. Members from Ireland and 200 hon. Members from the other parts of the Kingdom who are pledged to resist proposals of this kind. Does not the hon. Member really think that that is enough to secure full and free discussion for such measures? Why, then, should such proposals be specially excepted from the Rule while all other Business is not? With all deference to the hon. Member, this is a proposal so extravagant as to be almost absurd. The Government ask for no exceptional facilities for any legislation that it may be our duty to propose with the view of increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland. We only ask that such legislation should be considered under the Rules which we propose should be adopted for all the Business of the House. Circumstances might arise—as they arose a few years ago—when the House may be asked to adopt immediate Urgency Rules; but that is not the case now. The Government at present ask the House to adopt Rules for the ordinary Business of the House, and in that ordinary Business any proposals for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland will be of course included. Sir, we simply decline, with all respect to the hon. Member, to accept the proposal he has made, and which I cannot think he has made with any anticipation of its being agreed to.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat surprised at the tone the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) adopted in reply to the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for the city of Cork (Mr. Parnell). The Amendment which has been proposed is one of very great importance indeed to us, and for the right hon. Gentleman to characterize it as absurd is not the way which will carry conviction to the House, or tend in any way to facilitate the course of the debate. Having cast his shot, and made use of this not very

courteous phrase, the right hon. Gentleman disappears from the House. We ought to take a lesson from the fate of the late Mr. Forster's Coercion Bill, for which urgency was demanded and obtained. Before the legitimate debate on that Bill was finished, and when the clock had marked a certain hour, the clauses which had not even been reached were taken *in globo* without any further discussion. Such a thing is very likely to happen again under these Rules. Mr. Forster's Coercion Bill did not in the least attain the object its promoters had in view, owing no doubt to the fact that it was never properly discussed. Of course on certain occasions, I admit, the discussion on that Bill lasted a considerable time, and may have been even wearisome to the Government; but, as I have said, the complete failure of the Crimes Act was due to the fact that many of its provisions were not duly considered. In olden days Coercion Bills were passed by this House in the course of a few hours, but there is no one to-day who will say that the passage of those Bills was fraught with anything but evil to both countries. Formerly, a Minister in a state of frantic excitement, and animated by unnecessary fears, brought down an ill-considered Bill, the clauses of which he scarcely understood, and which were drafted possibly by order by lawyers who were not in the least acquainted with the necessities of the country, or with the people, or with the circumstances under which the Bill was passed; and therefore it was not unreasonable that, as a rule, such a Bill did a great deal of injury. What are we doing now? According to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the Rules we are introducing into this House are for the purpose of accelerating the ordinary Business of the House. I should have thought that the Chief Secretary for Ireland would not have had the courage to get up in his place and speak of a Coercion Bill as the ordinary legislation of this House. The whole point of the Amendment and arguments of my hon. Friend the Member for the city of Cork is that coercion is not the ordinary Business of the House of Commons. What is a Coercion Bill? We are accustomed to Coercion Bills in this House, and I do not wonder that some hon. Members look upon coercion as the ordinary Business

[Fourth Night.]

of the Tory Party. Coercion means the suspension of Habeas Corpus. When we speak of the Habeas Corpus we are supposed to refer to the foundation of civil liberty. Courts of Justice give the most generous hearing, and stretch the Rules of the Court to the very utmost in the endeavour to give a just amount of consideration to anything which trenches upon the foundation of the civil liberty of the subject. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland asks the House to refuse this Amendment because, forsooth, the Rule is brought in for the purpose of accelerating the ordinary Business of the House, and asks how can we make exception in the case of one portion of the ordinary Business of the House? I cannot compliment the right hon. Gentleman upon his experience as Chief Secretary. He will find that before very long that coercion is far more than ordinary and stronger than extraordinary Business. Great advances have been made of late in the views entertained in this country upon the question of coercion. There are hon. Members sitting opposite who three or four years ago looked—as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary does—upon coercion as the ordinary legislation of this House, but who we shall find pledged themselves at the last Election never to support coercion again. There is a further reason why we should have full liberty to oppose such Bills as the Government promises relating to the Criminal Law in Ireland. Diversified in character as Coercion Bills have been, they have proved a succession of failures, and it is for that reason we think we are entitled to have a full and free discussion upon the new Bill that is promised. We do not ask to be allowed to debate the measures for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland for weeks and months. That would be unreasonable. Our demand is a very simple one. It is that we shall not be deprived of the civil rights which are given under what you call the glorious statute of liberty, but that we shall have full and ample time to discuss the coercive proposals which the Government have in contemplation. I cannot compliment the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary upon his effort to-night. I think it would have been wiser of him to have held his tongue altogether, and left it with the First Lord of the Treas-

ury (Mr. W. H. Smith) to answer the arguments which have been advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for the city of Cork to have answered them, as I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman would, frankly and courteously, and with an endeavour to give some arguments why he could not agree to the Amendment.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I feel it my duty to join my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Molloy) in expressing regret and disappointment at the speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) in replying upon the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). The speech of the right hon. Gentleman is one of ill-omen for the future. The position of the hon. Member for Cork as Leader of the Irish Party in this House, and also as the recognized Leader of the Irish people, merited, especially at the present critical stage in politics, some better attention than it received in the firm, curt, and discourteous words the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary uttered. My hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) desires that any proposal brought before the House to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law of Ireland shall be excepted from the operation of this Rule. Will the House allow me to point out for a moment that up to the present time, although we have had regulations of closure in force, we have had at least some nominal and ostensible protection in the nature of the Rule in force; for the initiative lay with Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker was bound according to the Rule to have regard not only to the question whether the matter in debate had been adequately discussed, but also to the evident sense of the House. We of the minority felt there must be some protection in this provision for, at any rate, the closure could not be ordered until there had been some debate, and until the majority in the House had made some such manifestation of opinion or feeling as to enable the Speaker to decide that the sense of the House had been manifested in a certain direction. In the present Rule these securities have disappeared. No doubt an hon. Member has still to consult the Chair, but in what manner has he to do it. It is clear, Sir, that any hon. Member can

go to your side and say to you in private "I desire that the Question be now put;" and it appears under these Rules that you would be entitled to say, "Very well, move it," and thus wash your hands of all responsibility in the matter. The Rule merely says you, Mr. Speaker, are to give your consent. Therefore, as it now stands, the Rule deprives us of any security we may hitherto have had. Now, I consider that if at any moment the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland should have been particularly careful in replying to such an Amendment as that of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), it is the present moment. We all know that the proposal will presently be made for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland; we have learned that from the Queen's Speech. The House is well aware that at the present moment, and under the existing system of the administration of the Criminal Law, a great proceeding of State has closed in the disagreement of the jury, and in a disagreement of the jury which left half on one side and half on the other. If that is so, is it not apparent that the Government in Ireland can put no confidence in the class whom they have hitherto singled out for the due administration of the law? It is, therefore, more essential than ever that the circumstances attendant upon the passage of measures affecting the Criminal Law in Ireland should not be such as to excite the indignation of the people. The future administration of the Criminal Law in Ireland is, from the point of view of those who desire effective administration, a black and gloomy future. If a Criminal Law is to be enacted in this House under circumstances which forbid a full and free expression of the opinion of the Representatives of Ireland, what is the first effect in this House of the application of the closure to a measure for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland? It is, as you know, to beget a spirit of resistance in the minds of the Irish Members. The House is aware that if the Irish Members are allowed full and free discussion upon a measure as to which they feel strongly and acutely—a measure in which the rights and liberties of the Irish people are concerned—a measure involving the deprivation of the ordinary rights of the Constitution in Ireland—

that measure is likely, in the long run, to go through more smoothly than if the Irish Members are debarred from discussing it. I see the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) in his place, and I would like to ask him whether his experience in the House teaches him that, upon a measure for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland, it is at all likely that the time of the House will be saved by the application of the closure—one application of the closure to one Amendment, or to one Clause, is likely to lessen the ingenuity or to decrease the resistance by which subsequent clauses will be met by the general body of the Irish Members? The application of the closure to an Irish Coercion Bill has the effect, not of economizing time, but eventually of dissipating it. We claim full debate. We are a minority here. Ireland sends you 100 Members; four-fifths of them are of one opinion upon any such measure as that foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech. We are 80 men among 670. We come from another country, another people, from people of a different race, of a different history, existing now in conditions, socially, very different from yourselves, and with interests of the nature and extent of which no Englishman, except by visiting Ireland, can have any accurate idea. I claim, therefore, that when any measure comes before the House of Commons for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland, for selecting juries, changing venue, packing juries, not only have we a special and indefeasible right to be heard, and fully heard, with reference to the merits of every proposition contained in such a measure, but we are the only persons in this House who are competent, by experience and knowledge of the country concerned, to instruct the House of Commons and the country upon the merits of such a Bill. I remember a few years ago—certainly before the Irish political question assumed so acute a phase as it has taken now—reading a remarkable passage in *The Times* newspaper. It was stated that, although Parliament refuses Ireland a great many measures, and passed a great many measures Ireland did not like, Irish Members were, at any rate, listened to. I thought that was very inadequate satisfaction. It is something to be listened

to if you can have your own way; but you will not listen to what we urge in defence of one class of Bills and against another class of Bills. Not only do I believe that any attempt to employ closure in reference to a Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland will be evil in its effects in this House, but I believe it will be evil in its effects in the country. There are millions of people in England, Scotland, and Wales who have come to think that the Criminal Law in Ireland, as at present administered, operates against class. There are millions of people who think that any increase in the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland should be watched with jealous suspicion, because they agree with that distinguished and gallant gentleman (Sir Redvers Buller) that, up to the present time, the law has been administered in the interests of the landlords in Ireland, and they are very unwilling that any increase in the stringency of the Criminal Law should be made without full opportunities being afforded to the Irish Members of expressing their opinions, and endeavouring to influence, if they can, the public opinion of the country. However, Sir, what effect will it have upon the efficiency of the Criminal Law in Ireland if it is felt that such a law has been passed by the agency of gagging the Irish Members? Such a law will go forth from you without authority, and will come back to you without respect. These are the reasons which compel me to submit to the House that the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork deserves a better reception than that it has received at the hands of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I believe that the harmony of the House, the satisfaction of public feeling, and the efficiency of the law will be injured by the refusal of this Amendment.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I join in expressing regret at the attitude which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has assumed upon this Amendment. I think that his greatest enemies must acknowledge that if anyone is entitled to speak for Ireland, and to put forward Irish demands, it is the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). He has on many

occasions proposed to the House measures which he considered necessary for the good government of Ireland. These measures have been rejected, and I think hon. Members will acknowledge that events have proved that the House has been unwise in the course they have adopted, and that matters would have gone smoothly had the House listened with a little more attention to the very moderate claims the hon. Member (Mr. Parnell) has from time to time put forward. The claim which my hon. Friend now makes is that you should exempt any coercive measure for Ireland which you deem it necessary to introduce from the operation of this Rule. What will be the effect of a Coercion Act which is passed if the Irish Members have not had an opportunity of expressing their views upon the Act? In the past Coercion Acts have produced serious crime; but if you pass a Coercion Act, and at the same time gag Irish Members, you will increase crime in Ireland tenfold. We, who know the Irish people, know that these Coercion Acts, to pass which Ministers will be able to apply the closure, are intended for one class of people only. Many Liberals and even some Conservative Members are pledged to oppose coercion—they will violate their pledges if they facilitate the passing of a Coercion Act by consenting to gag the Irish Members. We are the accredited Representatives of the Irish people, and it certainly is a queer state of things if the Constitutional Party ignores completely the views of the country constitutionally expressed. We submit that if this Rule is extended to the debates which we shall have before long in connection with coercive legislation, you will only aggravate the political situation, you will further irritate people in Ireland, and, so far from making the government of Ireland less difficult, you will make it more difficult.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.): Sir, it may be impossible for the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) to carry his Amendment. Still, I think the hon. Member is justified in moving it, as a protest against the way in which we legislate for Ireland. I am prepared to assert the principle that we are extremely unwise in endeavouring to legislate in the manner suggested by the Amendment—to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law in one of the

Three Kingdoms—if the Representatives of the people of the Kingdom to which we are going to apply this increased stringency entirely object to it. Parliament has the power to override the wishes of the Representatives of the Irish people, and it not only has the power, but it exercises that power. We have been accustomed to exercise it in the most flagrant manner, and the most conspicuous instance of the exercise of that power of late years was in 1881, when almost the whole House, in a sort of passion, suspended the Habeas Corpus in Ireland, in the teeth of the opposition of nearly every Irish Representative—not only the Irish Representatives following my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, but also the Ulster Representatives. Seeing, then, we have that power, and are accustomed to exercise it, I am willing to arm Irish Members with as much authority as possible to resist it. Some five years ago the legislation in which we are now engaged was described by hon. Members opposite as the “gagging legislation.” Well, I am not unreasonably opposed generally to the legislation in which we are now engaged; but I am unwilling to apply the gag to enable you to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland without consulting its Representatives. That being so, I shall willingly vote with the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I rise to support the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); but in doing so I venture to suggest a slight verbal alteration. I would suggest the insertion of the words “Great Britain and” after the word “in” in the second line of the Amendment, so as to make the Amendment apply to the whole of the Three Kingdoms. It appears to me that the real union of the Three Kingdoms would be best promoted by making not only the Criminal Law alike, but the practice of the Criminal Law alike in the Three Kingdoms. We have heard since this Parliament met from a very high authority on the Benches opposite—the then Leader of the House—the noble lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), that the key-note to the Government policy in regard to Ireland was equality and similarity over the United Kingdom. We have had that view confirmed by hon. Mem-

bers on those Benches within the last few weeks, and I understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), earlier this evening, made some such suggestion as I now make. It does seem to me that if there be any freedom of speech in this House it should apply to any proposal with regard to the Criminal Law. Twice within the last 14 months we have heard you, Sir, as our Speaker, lay claim at the Bar of the House of Lords for freedom of speech in debate that has been allowed, as it has been for generations, by the Crown. I think we who sit on the Opposition Benches are only fulfilling the highest duty which is cast upon us in saying that when any Government comes forward to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law the utmost freedom of speech and debate shall be granted. I therefore beg, Sir, to move the insertion of the words I have mentioned.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, after the words “Law in,” to insert the words “Great Britain and.” —(Mr. J. E. Ellis.)

Question proposed, “That those words be inserted in the proposed Amendment.”

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I think there will be no objection on the part of the Irish Members to include the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) in the Amendment of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). What I and my hon. Friends complain of is that other nationalities refused to Ireland the privileges they enjoyed. We know that coercion is coming, and all we claim is to be assured by a vote of Parliament that no unfair use will be made of the Forms of the House to stifle discussion on the Coercion Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), some years ago, was one of the most eloquent opponents of closure, and he opposed it expressly on the ground that it might be used unfairly against Irishmen, and might make the task of governing Ireland more difficult than it was. The Chief Secretary had better beware that he does not find his own words come true. If the Chief Secretary beat the Irish Members

down in a Division, and make unfair use of the Rule in forcing on coercion, he will find the ultimate task of governing Ireland not more pleasant than it would otherwise be. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has had the opportunity of giving us an assurance that the Rules will not be unfairly used; but he only took the opportunity to make remarks not very complimentary to the hon. Member for Cork. There never has been any unfair obstruction carried on by Irish Members. ["Oh, oh!" and laughter.] Those hon. Members opposite who laugh know nothing about it—many of them were not in the House at the time. Mr. Speaker Brand, who was a most Constitutional Speaker, laid down in July, 1877, a definition of Obstruction when he declared—

"That any Member wilfully and persistently obstructing Public Business without just and reasonable cause is guilty of contempt of the House."

I maintain that the Irish Members have never conducted a prolonged discussion without "just and reasonable cause," and that, therefore, they are altogether free from the charge of Obstruction. But I remember that Obstruction, or something approaching Obstruction, has been carried on by hon. Gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury Benches, and I do not suppose that they will be found to repudiate altogether the tactics which greatly assisted in carrying them to the Ministerial Benches. The right hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Marriott), who has so distinguished himself by his former opposition to the closure, once said that if ever there was a time when a vigorous and sustained opposition to the proceedings of a Government was justifiable, it was when that Government was holding the iron hand over a portion of the Kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman was then referring to the policy pursued towards Ireland by the Party which he has since left; but it is to be hoped that he still now adheres to the spirit of that declaration. If ever there was a time when it is necessary that great freedom and even latitude of discussion should be allowed, it is on proposals intended to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law; more especially when those proposals, as will probably be the case in this instance, are to be of a permanent and, not like most previous Irish coercive measures, of only a temporary nature.

Mr. M. J. Kenny

On one occasion, when the freedom of the Press was being defended in this House by the Whig Party, and no fewer than 23 Divisions were taken in one night, Mr. Burke said that posterity would bless the pertinacity shown on that day. The Irish Members feel that the liberties of their countrymen are as important as the freedom of the Press; and they now ask not to divide the House 23 times in a single night, but that there may be a full and fair discussion on a question of such momentous importance as the Criminal Law.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I think that any alteration of the Criminal Law for England, Ireland, and Scotland ought to be fully and fairly debated, free from the restrictions imposed by the Rule under consideration. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) appears to gloat over the powers sought to be obtained, as if they were already in his hands; but the right hon. Gentleman may not find it so easy to get the Coercion Bill that he is so anxious for. This Rule may be passed in spite of the opposition of the Irish Members, and there is no reason to doubt that the Government will use it in the tyrannical spirit that is always manifested towards my section of the House from the Benches opposite. The Government may succeed in driving Irish discontent under the surface, they may succeed in driving the Irish Members out of the House—a result, by the way, which will have no terrors for those hon. Members; but English Representatives ought to take care lest they should realize, when too late, that the powers about to be given to the Government, instead of injuring Ireland, will be used for their own destruction.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) has placed me in some difficulty. I had no difficulty in supporting the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); because, although it reads "the increase of the stringency of the Criminal Law," I assume that every hon. Member of this House understands that to mean that kind of increase of the stringency of the Criminal Law which expressly deals with the suspension of the liberties of the subject, and the application of coercive legislation against persons who

are political offenders rather than ordinary criminals. Now, we have not had in England in modern times—not within ordinary memory—such increased stringency of what, doubtless, is Criminal Law technically speaking, but would not be thus ordinarily understood, and I intended to support the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork, very much in consequence of some words used the other evening by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). The right hon. Gentleman said that no one could doubt, or no one ought to doubt, the British sense of fair play being properly shown under all circumstances in this House. Well, six years' experience in this House gave me great reason for doubting whether, when any question arises which excites prejudice or Party feeling for the moment, all sense of fair play might not be forgotten. And while I held and do hold the doctrine that Parliamentary Government is only possible and can only be conducted with credit when the minority have been fairly heard, and, if they are an unpopular minority, indulgently heard, still I am of opinion that after that hearing has been given a Parliamentary Government can only be well-conducted by submitting to the voice of the majority. But we have had, without doubt, over and over again within the past few years, instances in which there has been no sense of British fair play towards one portion of these Kingdoms, and I should have voted without hesitation for the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork. I feel now, however, in this difficulty. There is no kind of Amendment of the Criminal Law of the United Kingdom that could not be included under the construction that might fairly be put on the wording of the amendment last proposed. While, therefore, recognizing the spirit which has prompted the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) in making his proposal, I shall vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork as a protest against unfair play, which, I think, has been shown in the past, and which may be shown again when passion is roused. I do not think the English people have need of this protection. English Members have a strong backing of public

opinion behind them, which can make itself felt on the occupants of the two Front Benches; but experience has shown that there is not that protection for Members from Ireland.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I shall give all the support in my power to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). I had it in my mind to propose an Amendment to the Resolution; but I find that, in my absence, it has already been proposed by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis)—I refer to the Amendment which would apply the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork to Great Britain as well as Ireland. I vote for an Amendment of this nature upon the broad and general principle that no extraordinary legislation in the direction of destroying the liberties of the subject should be permitted in this House without the fullest deliberation and consideration. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), in what I may call his curt rejoinder to the hon. Member for Cork, said he certainly could not think of permitting the Amendment to pass, seeing that the Government were only asking for the passage of these Rules for the conduct of the ordinary Business of the House. Well, either the right hon. Gentleman considers coercive legislation as a part of the ordinary Business of the House—and I am not sure that that is not the general view of Tory Governments—or he must admit that coercive legislation for Ireland is not part of the ordinary Business of the House, in which case his argument in favour of passing this Rule without the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork goes for nothing at all. I should have felt surprised at the somewhat cynical tone adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in this matter, were it not that the experience of those who have fought in past years against coercive legislation for Ireland proves to us that it is no uncommon feature in the manner of the occupants of the Treasury Bench, whenever such coercive legislation is in question. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think it a very impudent thing to suggest that such an Amendment as this should find

any approval at all in the minds of the Government. But it seems to me that it is the most proper thing in the world that hon. Members from Ireland should make a stand on behalf of the liberties of their fellow-countrymen. I go further, and say it is a most proper thing that we who, it is true, do not represent Irish constituencies, but are sent here by English people, should side with our Irish Friends, and insist that no undue curtailment of the liberties of the subject shall be permitted, either in Ireland or this country. The Tory Government and their supporters are constantly reminding us—*ad nauseam*—that the country, at the last Election, decided peremptorily and finally against anything in the way of Home Rule. We have our own opinion upon that; and probably, if hon. Gentlemen opposite were to enjoy the popular meetings that are being held all over the country, they would have cause to agree with us; but if the country decided against Home Rule, it also decided against the return of the exploded policy of coercion for Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the principle of coercion is not the subject of discussion, but the question of the application of the *clôture* when coercive measures are introduced.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was endeavouring, Mr. Speaker, to lead up my argument, and to explain and justify my opposition to the application of the *clôture* to this subject of coercive legislation; but, of course, I submit at once to your ruling. I am here to perform my duty as a Member returned against any coercive legislation for Ireland; and I am, therefore, bound to take this earliest opportunity of protesting against any modification of the Rules of Procedure which would make such a policy, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, more easy to carry out than it is to-day. We, on this side of the House, cannot regard with any favour any Rule which will enable a Government to throttle freedom of discussion, and rush through the House coercive legislation. There may be cases where it may be necessary to take stringent measures in the shortest possible time. I do not think they are likely to recur—at any rate, I think

that if we are to err at all it is very much better to err on the safe side rather than upon the danger side, and to give public opinion time to form and declare itself before rushing through coercive legislation. If, as I say, a great crisis arises when it is necessary to pass a Bill through in a single evening—a Bill such as that relating to explosives, consequent upon certain dastardly attempts of the dynamite party—would it not be possible to deal with the matter by special Resolution of urgency, and would such a course not be better than running the risks which the adoption of this *Clôture* Resolution would involve? The Conservative Government in 1885 threw away the weapon of coercion; and if, therefore, the re-enactment of coercive measures is to be considered as extraordinary legislation, I maintain that to the *Clôture* Rule we require such Amendment as that proposed.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): We have, Sir, not only the Constitutional liberties of Ireland to protect, but also the privileges of the House of Commons. The Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) would protect both these privileges. I therefore desire to support that Amendment, and I may say I should not consider that I was discharging my duty to the 4,600 Irishmen who sent me here to protect those liberties if I gave any other vote. I think we on this side of the House have a right to complain of the conspiracy of silence on the Treasury Bench in regard to this Amendment, many hon. Members having risen on these Benches without eliciting a response from right hon. Gentlemen opposite. We, Sir, on this side are endeavouring to secure the freedom of discussion, and likewise the rights of minorities. So long as we sit in this House we shall always be in a minority, and our only hope is to take every opportunity of informing the English mind, which is now open to our demands and sympathizes with our interests. I consider that the Amendment should be carried for this reason—it protects the Privileges of the Chair and of the House. No higher definition of the Privileges of the Chair is given than that of Mr. Speaker Lenthall, who said—

"I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here."

But what does the Speaker become if the Clôture Rule passes? Does he become the protector of the House and the guardian of its liberties? On the contrary, those Privileges will be left in the hands of the Whip of the Government Party. The moral force of the Speaker will be lessened—his moral power curtailed, and instead of being arbiter and judge he will become simply the registration machine of the Whip of the Party in power. Therefore, although it may be supposed that I have had less regard for the Privileges of the House than some of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, I say we on this side are the truest friends of liberty of speech and the Privileges of the House and the Chair when we demand and implore for our country the right to have her faults stated and her grievances discussed. It has been suggested that this proposal with regard to coercive legislation should apply to England as well as to Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but I must remind him that the subject before the House is not coercion, but whether the clôture shall be applied to coercive measures.

MR. MAC NEILL: I beg to be excused on the ground of inexperience of the Rules of the House. I shall possibly have an opportunity of speaking elsewhere on these points. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has said that it would be impossible to rush such a measure as one for coercion through the House with 86 Irish and 200 English Members pledged against coercion. The best reply to that is the reply previously given—that in 1866 a Habeas Corpus Act for Ireland was rushed through the House when there was no one here to protest against it. Before the existence of the Irish Party and a sympathetic Liberal Party, it was quite usual to re-enact coercion for Ireland in the Expiring Acts Continuance Bill at the end of the Session. The subject was not then discussed; but clôture is now deemed to be necessary, because the Irish Members are determined to discuss the subject, and deter-

mined to tell the English people what it is, so that, at all events, they will not act in ignorance. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has cited his own case for an illustration, that in the heat of political and religious passion fair play is not shown in this House. That is undoubtedly the fact with respect to the question of coercion. Fair play is not shown, because political feeling is heated to such an extent as to preclude the exercise of calm judgment. In support of this statement I would refer the House to the case of Mr. Floyd, which occurred in the time of James I., when human nature was the same as it is now. Mr. Hallam, in his *Constitutional History*, cites the case of this unfortunate gentleman as

"An unhappy proof of the disregard that popular assemblies, when inflamed by passion, are ever apt to show for those principles of equity and moderation, by which, however the sophistry of contemporary factions may set them aside, a calm judging posterity will never fail to measure their proceedings."

If this Resolution is passed in its present form it will assail the liberties of minorities, the Privileges of Parliament, and also the Privileges of the Chair—the very gist of our political existence. As I understand it, the function of the Irish Members is to inform English opinion. I do not care to introduce personal matters in connection with such a grave subject as this; but I would ask who turned out the Liberal Government on the question of coercion in 1885?

MR. SPEAKER: I must again remind the hon. Member of the subject before the House.

MR. MAC NEILL: I would again warn the Government that their political existence is not likely to be continuous, and that the very instruments which they are now making may possibly be used against themselves, when they will be unsupported by the sympathy of the friends of liberty, and when they will be allowed to feel themselves the measures which they mete out to others.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I do not intend, Sir, to go into the question of coercion, but to confine myself strictly to the question at issue; that is, I understand, of approval or disapproval of the insertion in the Resolution, in accordance with the Motion of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), of the words—

[Fourth Night.]

"Other than a question arising on any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland."

I understand that the hon. Member for Cork will not be unwilling that his Amendment should be amended in the sense of the omission of the words "in Ireland." I shall vote for the insertion of the Amendment, whether the words "in Ireland" be included or not; but I shall vote for them more heartily and with greater satisfaction if they end at "Criminal Law." One of the main arguments that I must urge in favour of the addition of these words is that any questions that relate to the Criminal Law are questions of a peculiar and isolated character in our legislation. It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to make any quotation as to the importance of our Criminal Law; but I will make three, and only three. Montesquieu, in his *Esprit des Loix*, says—

"It is upon the excellence of the Criminal Laws that chiefly the liberty of the citizen depends."

Blackstone also, in reference to the system of English Criminal Law, says—

"A Constitution that I may venture to affirm has under Providence secured the liberties of this nation for a long succession of ages."

And Mittermaier concludes his work on the Penal Process of England, Scotland, and the United States by saying—

"It will be more and more acknowledged how true it is that the penal legislation of a nation is the keystone of that nation's public law."

It is for that reason that I desire to exempt any question of the Criminal Law from the operation of the Government Resolution. If there be anything that distinguishes the English nation from other nations, it is its great and remarkable respect for law, and especially for Criminal Law. I have even heard it stated that evil laws might be enacted in this country which are not enacted elsewhere, owing to the habits of obedience to the law which are so universally diffused among the people of England. I would here quote a few remarks that were made on a very remarkable Bill. In 1736 there was proposed in this country a Bill for the prevention of smuggling, and I would call attention to some of the sentiments uttered in the debate on that measure. Lord Chancellor Talbot said—

"For this reason we ought to be extremely jealous of loading our people with pains and penalties, or subjecting them to a multitude of penal laws; for oppression may be easily cloaked under colour of an Act of Parliament, and many may be hanged or transported under pretence of their having been guilty of some action made penal by statute, without raising any general murmur among the people, or giving the alarm to those who do not then think themselves in danger of any such prosecution; whereas the least act of oppression, without any such pretence, would raise a general murmur and give an universal alarm, because every man in the kingdom would think himself in danger. . . . No law can be proposed, for the necessity of which some reasons may not be urged; even the most tyrannical laws have been made under the pretence of preventing or punishing some real abuse."—(*Parliamentary History*, [9] 1254-5.)

The whole force of these words rests and lies in this—that the people of England obey readily the law enacted by this Parliament, and that the Criminal Law of England, when it is law and not discretion, is a law which the people of England obey. Why, Sir, is it that the people of England obey so readily the Criminal Law? Is it not because it has been well known to be a very stable law, a law not readily changed, and, above all things, because it has been recognized as in no sense tainted with a Government flavour, but the law of the General Parliament of this country? There can be little doubt, I think, that when we have established this closure the laws which we pass in this Parliament will be to a certain extent—however little—tainted with a Government flavour. I do not, for one, object to that in general; but there is one point at which I do certainly object to it—that point is wherever we touch on the Criminal Law. I feel sure that everything connected with the Criminal Law, whether it be in England or Ireland, ought to be subjected to the minutest, even, I will venture to say, the obstructive investigation of this House, so that there may be no doubt whatever that there is no special Government flavour given to anything connected with the Criminal Law. I am speaking simply of the application of the *clôture* to subjects affecting the Criminal Law, and, to use an old phrase, I say let there be "hands off" on this matter. No doubt the apology for the *clôture* as affecting other questions will be that if the majority exercise it unfairly the country will rebel, that 100, perhaps 1,000, newspapers will at once

call upon the country to notice what the Government have done, and that those who so readily sympathize with the oppressed would readily respond in the matter. On this point I would quote a great Constitutional lawyer, De Lolme. He says—

“When the rulers see that all their actions are exposed to public view, that in consequence of the celerity with which all things become communicated, the whole nation forms, as it were, one continued ‘irritable body,’ no part of which can be touched without exciting an universal tremor, they become sensible that the cause of each individual is the cause of all, and that to attack the lowest among the people is to attack the whole people.”

That, Sir, is the exact position from which we in England view this Clôture Resolution, and we feel firm and secure in its enactment. But I ask the House whether the whole body of the English people have so readily responded in the past to acts of injustice and oppression when they have been committed against Ireland? We do not read Irish newspapers; we hear little of Irish complaints—though happily we on this side of the House, at any rate, are now sensible of the oppression in Ireland. But the time has been when the oppressed in that country did not find very ready sympathy in England. There can be no doubt that we have become accustomed to violations of the Criminal Law in Ireland, and to neglect the protests of the Irish people; and I conceive, therefore, that if the Irish minority be overruled in this country by the majority the voice of this country, ignorant as it is of the circumstances of the Irish people, will not so readily respond as it would in the case of England to vindicate their rights and to claim their due position before the law of this country. It is, therefore, not only on account of the great importance of the Criminal Law itself that I support this Amendment, but with respect especially to Ireland, because the very apology for your closure does not exist in its full force in regard to that country. I and many hon. Friends around me are determined not to support coercion in Ireland, or to lessen the difficulties which surround the adoption of a coercive policy. It may be said that to be consistent we should propose the exemption of all Irish questions from the operation of the clôture. That may be so; but the real difficulty in Ireland is that there is no trust in the

criminal administration of the country, and it is because I desire to see the Criminal Law of Ireland framed in accordance with the sentiments of the vast majority of the people that I desire that the Irish Representatives should have on any question affecting an alteration in the Criminal Law the fullest and amplest opportunity of expressing their opinions. Though I am in favour of the clôture, of shortening debates, and of more rapid Procedure, I desire at this moment to vote for the exemption from the clôture of all matters affecting the Criminal Law both of Ireland and England.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) : I am glad to be able to support the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) to amend the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), although I am bound to say that the wording of it is not altogether apt. While the Amendment would exempt from the operation of the Rule measures for England and Ireland it would possibly cover the admission under the Rule of several measures of coercion for Ireland alone. Under the present circumstances it appears to me an extraordinary thing that there should have been a succession of speeches from this side of the House and an obstinate and continued silence from the Ministerial Benches; and I cannot help being particularly struck with the demeanour of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I have witnessed the urbanity of the right hon. Gentleman through a series of years in this House, and I must say that his curtness towards the hon. Member for Cork this evening has astonished me, and those who observed it must have concluded that some very strong pressure has been put upon the right hon. Gentleman to cause him to depart from his usual bearing. I think it is incumbent on the right hon. Gentleman to give us some idea of the reason for the position which he has taken up. There is a remarkable omission from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. We have been led to believe that the Rules are not particularly directed in any way to the furtherance of coercive legislation, and I expected to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland

an explanation of the fact that when he put his hand to the drafting of Resolutions for the despatch of Business not long ago he never bethought himself of such Rules as we have now before us. I was a Member of the Committee before which the Resolutions of the right hon. Gentleman came, and there was nothing in them which at all resembles the Rule we are now discussing. We have all expected that the right hon. Gentleman would give some explanation of the ground on which he has so strangely altered his original position. What has occurred since the right hon. Gentleman drafted his first Resolution? The construction of it is strangely altered for the worse, because since then we have had it announced to us in the Speech from the Throne that it was the intention of the Government to urge forward coercive legislation for Ireland. We are not told anything about coercive legislation for Great Britain. I am prepared to maintain that it is not possible to adduce an instance from the history of this House that such proposals have been unduly obstructed. In April, 1883, after an explosion of dynamite in the neighbourhood of the House, a Bill was carried through all its stages in a single evening by the right hon. Gentleman the then Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt). If you had had obstruction applied to the criminal measures brought in a year or two ago in consequence of the proceedings of a certain portion of society in London, do you imagine that if closure had been in force the Bill which then passed into law would have been improved by it? Certainly not, Sir. You propose this measure for the purpose of getting rid of the resistance of hon. Members to the Bills for coercion in Ireland. But coercion in Ireland has never attained the end for which it was devised, and in this House it will be precisely the same. You began with coercive Rules against the freedom of hon. Members several Sessions ago; those Rules have disappointed your expectations, and the present Rule will in due time also disappoint your expectations. It will be in the recollection of many in this House that Jeremy Bentham, in speaking of this Assembly, especially dwelt upon the fact that freedom of discussion was here unfettered; he compared it with the Assemblies of

other countries where there are devices for urgency and the closing of discussion, and he particularly contrasted the French system unfavourably with the system of this House. If you go on forging new fetters for hon. Members of this House you will soon forfeit that character, and you will find that the strictures passed upon the Procedure of other countries will not only be applied to your Procedure, but eminently deserved.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I welcome the addition proposed by the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), because the effect of the alteration will be to include coercive legislation for England; and, that being so, it will probably tempt hon. Members opposite to depart from their conspiracy of silence on this question. We have had many speeches in favour of my hon. Friend's Amendment, and, with the exception of the curt and unhandsome reply from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, we have had no reply from the Government Bench. I think the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) stated that the fact that there were so many hon. Members opposed to coercion for Ireland was a good reason why the *clôture* should be applied—that is to say, that it should be applied to the 280 Members who are sent here to oppose the facilitation of coercion for Ireland. If that is the law with which the right hon. Gentleman is to rule the country, the sooner the House knows it the better. There is one reason, besides others, why this Amendment should be passed. There is no doubt that Parliament has been frequently carried away by passion. Now, if full discussion were allowed, there would be time given to the country to draw breath, and recover from the panic that may seize it, and then put forth its voice to prevent the House plunging into measures which in calmer moments it would not take. This House is asked to have some limitations of the Rules that have been proposed; and we who know the effect of the adoption of hasty proposals, and have experienced the effects in our own persons and families, are inclined to interpose our most strenuous efforts to the proposals of the Government.

I remember in times past, when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended from time to time, the feeling of gloom which was spread over Ireland through the undue haste with which this Parliament had acted. The way in which our families were disturbed and our homes broken up is still strong amongst us; and if hon. Members had the same experience as we have, I am sure they would hesitate to afford any facilities for the increase of the severity of the Criminal Law in Ireland.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): It would, in my opinion, be more dignified for the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to stand up and move the closure of this debate than that hon. Members should come trooping into the House to drown the voices of Irish Members who are speaking in the interests of the constituencies which they represent. If hon. Members could be induced to act intelligently, and in a gentlemanly manner—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must withdraw that expression as regards hon. Members of this House.

MR. NOLAN: I withdraw it, Sir. I was about to say that were I an English Member of this House I should certainly resist any attempt to introduce the closure. It is not hard to discover the object which the Government have in view in introducing this Rule from the utterances of right hon. Gentlemen in this House. It is their intention to apply the Clôture Rule to hon. Members from Ireland, because the charge has been made that they are in the habit of obstructing the Business of the House. But that charge I beg leave utterly to deny. In 1866 an important measure of coercion was passed in this House in a very short time; since then matters have gone from bad to worse in respect of crime, although, happily, a change in that respect has recently come over the country. It behoves Her Majesty's Government, therefore, to take into consideration that coercive measures in the past could not bring the people of Ireland within the tyranny of a class. I beg to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): To the clôture in the abstract I have no objection whatever, and I will admit that a good measure of clôture would not only be rational in itself, but conducive

to the acceleration of Business as well as to the better performance of its functions by this legislative machine, as it has been well called. But will this be so? There is no doubt that this Rule is introduced for the purpose of accelerating the passage of a Coercion Bill for Ireland. Will anyone get up and deny that it is not intended to apply to the discussion of any of the measures introduced this Session with the exception of one? It is that one measure of coercion to which it is intended to be applied. I think English Members should pause before introducing a measure with such an object, and that hon. Members from Ireland would be recreant indeed if they did not raise their voices in protest against the Rule. We have had Coercion Acts enough for Ireland; some passing in a few hours, some of them occupying weeks of the time of the House, and now we are threatened with another. In Ireland the great object seems to be to make war on public opinion—the Government make war upon public opinion there by proclamations and by prosecutions for conspiracy. We know what has been the effect of that in Ireland; we know that neither prosecutions nor proclamations will stifle public opinion there, and that closure will not stifle the voices of Irish Members in this House who are sent here to give effect to that public opinion. I am glad that the hon. Member (Mr. J. E. Ellis) has enlarged the scope of my hon. Friend's Amendment, and that he has brought us face to face with the fact that you cannot stifle the voice of Irish Members in this House without, at the same time, striking a blow at freedom of speech in this country and raising the voice of the people of England in its defence. For these reasons, I shall vote for the Amendment before the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I am glad to find that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has been amended by the addition of the words "Great Britain and Ireland." There is no hon. Member of the House who doubts what is the intention and practical aim of this Rule. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) gave us to understand that it was to be the primary governing principle of the Tory Party and Government that there

was to be nothing peculiar in the future in the government of Ireland. We have before us at this moment the request that before this Rule is passed which might in future imperil liberty of debate in this House upon the most vital, constitutional, and heart-stirring questions, as far as possible freedom shall be given us to examine the collateral bearings of the questions which will come before us. The freedom and rights of every citizen in this Realm is affected by the present position. The Front Bench opposite has met the complaints from this side of the House with almost absolute silence. I admire the discretion of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. But a short time ago every man among them was railing against any curtailment of the Privileges of hon. Members of this House, and the adoption in any form of this system of closure. If I were to go over the whole question I could present to the House a spectacle anything but creditable to hon. Gentlemen opposite. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland will excuse me if I say that he is meeting in an unbecoming manner the anxiety which exists in this House with regard to the curtailment of the liberty of debate. I agree with the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) that the question has become one which affects this country; and I think we are entitled to demand from the Government that, at any rate, the new Rule shall not be applied to any Bill to fetter the rights of the subject, or give increased stringency to the Criminal Law. We have the satisfaction to know that we have arrived at this stage—that the object for which this Rule is now proposed is definite and specific. It is impossible to disconnect these two points of consideration. We are asked to alter the Rules of Procedure and further curtail the rights of debate in order that, when a subsequent measure is presented to us, the ancient freedom of debate which has existed in this House may no longer exist. I am exceedingly surprised, Sir, that a Conservative Government should so suddenly turn its back upon its principles as to make such a proposal in this House. Sooner or later I suppose, when these Rules are passed by the present House of Commons, the way will be secure for the further progress of Business, and for the principal measures which the Government now in power are preparing for

Parliament, especially in regard to Ireland. I anticipate that, when that time comes, the whole Party on the Opposition side of the House will be sorely exercised. The great majority here on the Opposition Benches will prepare to oppose that measure for which this is a preliminary and a clearing of the way; and even for those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have established for themselves the name of Liberal Dissentients I am afraid the moment will be a very distressing and a sorely exercising one. Be that as it may, I believe that the only object of the Government in proposing this further curtailment of debate is in order to apply a gag to the Irish Members. I am prepared to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I see, sitting opposite, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). I make the admission that I did not notice in great minuteness what he said at his late Election in St. George's, Hanover Square — [*Cries of "Question!"*]—but at Liverpool he declared himself still a Liberal, though separated from the Liberal Party. [*Renewed cries of "Question!"*] If hon. Gentlemen will be patient, they will see how very closely the observations I am now making bear upon the question which is before the House. The right hon. Gentleman avowed himself a Liberal, for an exceptional moment identified with, and willing to connect himself with, the Tory Party. Mr. Speaker, the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who is the most potential force in the House at this moment, made a loan of the right hon. Gentleman as a sort of General of Division to the Tory Party. Well, Sir, loans are sometimes made on easy terms, and sometimes on severe terms. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a loan made to the Conservative Party on rather severe terms. [*Cries of "Question!"*] I appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is prepared to turn his back upon all Liberal traditions, and stand by the Conservative Party in the curtailment of the Privileges of this House and of its individual Members, while fundamental and Constitutional questions affecting the liberty of the subject are specially involved? After the assurances

given to the Government from this side of the House that, so far as the ordinary Business of Parliament is concerned, there is no objection to any modification of the Rules which Business necessities involve, cannot the right hon. Gentleman be appealed to, if he has got a remnant left of that rag of Liberalism with which he formerly covered his political nakedness, to intervene and say that in the most vital question of the increase of the stringency of the Criminal Law, a question which affects Ireland directly, and the mass of the people of this country indirectly, the Law of Closure shall not apply? I sincerely hope that at a subsequent stage, when this Rule is passed, a direct Motion will be made with the specific object of reserving to us our freedom in the discussion of this great and fundamental question of individual liberty.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. Illingworth) has addressed an impassioned appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), by the Liberal principles to which he was attached, to vote against the proposals of Her Majesty's Government. I look on the Front Bench opposite for the Leaders of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Illingworth); I look for the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and the other right hon. Gentlemen whom the hon. Member for Bradford is accustomed to follow. They are not in their places, and there is no sign that they are prepared to assist the hon. Member in the course which he advocates with so much warmth. I do not wish to seem to make any distinction whatever between Ireland and Great Britain, and therefore the Government will agree to the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis); but no exception whatever can be made to the operation of the Rule. If it can be shown that increased powers are necessary to enable the authorities charged in any part of the Empire with maintaining law and order, the security of property, and the safety of life, to fulfil their duty, the measures which must be passed to confer such powers ought not to be excepted from

any general Rule applying to the ordinary conduct of Business in the House. I refuse to believe that the Liberal Party identify themselves with the protection of crime, and I declare in this House that it is a calumny to say that any men who feel compelled to bring forward measures for the improvement of the law have the slightest desire to stifle discussion, or to prevent the full exposition of the views that can be urged against their proposals. Hon. Members opposite seem to think that it is a pleasure to right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House to have to propose to Parliament measures which they know must be adopted, but which, in their hearts, they regret, and only bring forward under a sense of positive duty. [*Home Rule cries of "Weakness!"*] To hon. Members who charge the Government with weakness I would reply that no Government that desires to exist in a condition of peace and ease would propose measures, however necessary, which would be certain to meet with violent opposition and the most searching criticism. The proposals of the Government are not proposals for the limitation of adequate discussion, and there is no intention to interfere with freedom of debate or liberty of speech. Our proposals are made with the intention of restoring to Parliament its rightful authority, power, and influence, and of enabling it to legislate for the benefit of the Queen's subjects, and to transact the Business of the country. The object of the Government is to secure that there shall be real freedom of debate, as opposed to that licence of speech which is valueless in itself and impedes all good work.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I am disposed to agree with the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) in accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis); and I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on having at last let the cat out of the bag and disclosed the real motives which underlie the action of the Government in pressing forward these Rules post haste upon the House. From the moment that the right hon. Gentleman adopted the unprecedented course on the first day of the Session of asking for the whole time of the House for the Rules of Procedure, I knew well that the real object of the Tory Party was not to facilitate the

[Fourth Night.]

general Business of the House, but to obtain facilities for passing coercion, and from that moment I made up my mind that the fight against coercion had commenced. The right hon. Gentleman will find that he has done himself no service when, in an unguarded moment, he, in the speech just delivered, showed what he had up his sleeve. We are not to be deceived by specious pretences as to maintaining the dignity of the House and the freedom of debate. When did the Tories ever strive for the dignity of the House, or for the freedom of debate, except when they had a Coercion Act in progress? They were only anxious about these points when coercion for Ireland was impending, as when they, in 1882, supported the existing Rules brought forward by the Liberal Government. It was on that occasion that they first cut for themselves the rod that was afterwards fashioned by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian when he brought forward his New Rules, and when those New Rules were passed by the action of the Tory Party uniting with the Liberal Party for the purpose of facilitating the passage of a Coercion Act for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman opposite will find that he has cut a much sharper and more severe rod for his own back and the backs of his Friends, which will be administered by the Liberal Party, the Radical Party most likely of the future, in the days when the Conservative Party is weak and helpless, and hopelessly struggling for existence.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Question put,

"That the words 'other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Great Britain and Ireland' be there inserted."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 155; Noes 264: Majority 109.—(Div. List No. 23.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I am not without hope that the Government will assent to the Amendment which I am now about to propose—namely, to except Votes in Supply from the operation of the Rule. The question of Supply is entirely different in its bearing and aspect from other questions, such as votes upon Bills and Motions. Questions in Supply are peculiarly associated and identified with the historical struggles through which our forefathers have passed in wresting their liberties from the

hands of the Stuarts. In those days this House successfully asserted its right of controlling Grants of Supply to the Crown. The Ministers of the day, although they undoubtedly did represent a majority of the electors, did, at the same time, represent Parliament; and we ought not to forget, for a single instant, that, under our Constitutional system, they were able to exercise, and did constantly exercise, a power not derived from Parliament, apart from Parliament, without consultation with Parliament, a power of making treaties and making peace, or declaring war, which might be of vital importance. This, therefore, is not a time for the House to relax its grasp upon the control of Supply. When Europe appears to be on the point of conflagration, when, at any moment, the country may be drawn into a war of which none of us may see the end, and when this may happen owing to the want of the control of the House of Commons over Supply, this surely is not the time to relax any of the Constitutional restraints which our forefathers won after years of struggle. The House will, therefore, do well to consider what the bearing and the effect of the new Closure Rule will be as regards its operation in Supply. It will not be the harmless instrument which was fashioned, after discussion, years ago; but it will be one of new and unexampled stringency, which will give power to a Minister to come down to the House to propose a Vote in Supply, and to move the Chair that the Question be now put without allowing any debate whatever. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen say "No, no!" but what I have stated is, nevertheless, the absolute fact. What I ask is, that safeguards shall be inserted to prevent the abuse of this very stringent Rule, which gives a blank cheque to the Government of a most extraordinary and unlimited character. I therefore claim the support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon whom I look as a financier of most distinguished position and experience. I think the right hon. Gentleman, as a prudent business man, will say that it is not desirable to entrust Lord Salisbury, or the Leader of this House, with a blank cheque of such an extensive character as the New Rules will afford him, and which will enable him, if he is sure that he will be supported by a majority,

Mr. Parnell

to secure the Vote of Money to any extent for the purpose of any war, however iniquitous or however opposed to the sense and feeling of the people of this country, without debate.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the words "other than a Vote in Committee of Supply."—(Mr. Parnell.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Sir, the hon. Member opposite has forgotten that this question was debated early in the evening on the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan). The hon. and gallant Member founded the greater part of his speech on the power to deal with Votes in Supply, as well as proceedings in Committee of the House with the Chairman in the Chair. It will also be in the recollection of the House that the hon. and gallant Member especially referred at great length to questions of Supply.

MR. PARNELL: I wish to remind the right hon. Gentleman that I expressly refrained from speaking on the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan), as I had an Amendment of my own on the Paper.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I did not refer to the hon. Member's remarks at all. I merely referred to the remarks of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway, whose principal objection to the proposal of the Government was that it gave to a Member the power now possessed by the Speaker and the Chairman, with the sanction of the Speaker and Chairman. The hon. and gallant Member objected very much to Votes in Supply being dealt with under any power of closure; but I myself think there is probably no portion of the duties of the House in which the closure may be required more frequently than in Committee of Supply. It will be in the recollection of the House that last Session there were debates which extended possibly over many hours on, perhaps, the Queen's Plate, or a charwoman, and the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) has admitted that in consequence of protracted debates on small questions, later in the evening, millions of money had been passed in a

short time, because the exigencies of the country required that they should be so voted. I can only repeat that discussion will not be limited when discussion is necessary, and the importance of the subject requires it; and I will venture to say that if such a question as that of peace or war were raised in the House, and a Vote of Money taken upon it, no Government would propose to take such a Vote without full and ample discussion, nor do I believe that the majority of the House would support them in doing so. It is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to accept an Amendment exempting Committee of Supply from the operation of the Rule.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the line taken by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith). Because the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) happened accidentally to make a reference to the question of Supply, that is held to be a reason why the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell), specifically dealing with the subject, should be regarded as unworthy the attention of the Government. What is the case presented by the right hon. Gentleman? Few private Members of this House have attended more assiduously to Supply than myself, and, I regret to say, with precious little advantage. [*Ironical cheers.*] I can assure hon. Gentlemen that I very much appreciate their ironical cheering. There has been going on lately in this country a most enormous national expenditure. The Tory Party have been the worst sinners in promoting that expenditure. ["Oh, oh!"] Sir, I appeal to the recollection of the House, and I appeal personally to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), whether, on every occasion when a Liberal Government has been in power, and has proposed increased expenditure, every unit in the Tory Party has not voted in favour of the proposed increase? There is now a new spirit coming over the Conservative Party, or, at any rate, over an individual or two of that Party, in favour of economy. The right hon. Gentleman has said that, over and over again, small items such as those expended on the Queen's Plates and the Royal Yacht, and what-not, the Committee of the Whole House has fixed upon as instances of notorious extra-

gance, or of a policy on the part of the country that ought to be modified or altogether abandoned; and the right hon. Gentleman says that, after spending many hours over small items such as these, the larger items of expenditure have been necessarily passed without much discussion. I will explain how it is. It is because there has formed in the House a considerable Party prepared to put an end to these small items; but, unfortunately, such has been the state of feeling in this House that we have not been able to rally whenever the Government has come down with proposals of extravagance in connection with the Army or the Navy, and some of us are looking forward with delight to the altered conditions, when the Tory Party, casting its scales, is likely to be of service in the reduction of the large items of expenditure. It is not necessary to tell us we neglect the larger items and fix our attention on the smaller ones. The case of the hon. Member for Cork is this—that, where there may be a wide difference of opinion on a question, there should be at least six hours' discussion in the House and two hours in Committee before the Question is allowed to be put.

MR. W. H. SMITH: That is not the question before the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what the right hon. Gentleman knows the hon. Member for Cork is claiming. If the hon. Member for Cork is enabled to carry this Amendment, the two subsequent Amendments would not be necessary so far as the Committee of Supply is concerned. After the eminently unsatisfactory reply of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, there is no other course open to those who wish to preserve proper freedom for the Representatives of the taxpayers of this country than to vote with the hon. Member for Cork.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): It is my intention to vote in favour of this Amendment. [*Laughter.*] It is quite easy for the supporters of the Government to laugh under existing conditions; but I will ask them to remember that, by rejecting the Amendment, they are casting away the right of the Representatives of the people to discuss the question of Supply, whenever the Government of the day choose not to allow them to discuss it. That is what you are about to give away, and I have

only to say this—that I believe that if the Government were now to strike down this Privilege of Parliament in discussing even the voting of Supplies to the Crown they will drive debate from this House into the country, and will bring about a revolutionary agitation. Why, what is it that has made this country safe, but the knowledge of the fact that its Representatives can come here and make themselves heard? And what the Government is doing this night is to declare that, though the Representatives of the people may come here, they will not be allowed to discuss any matters except those which the Government think fit, and not even Votes in Supply. What is the period chosen for such a limitation of the privilege of debate as this? It is a period when the people of the country are awakening to the necessity of closely scrutinizing and discussing the Estimates more than ever they have been discussed in the past. It seems to me that, if this Amendment be rejected, I shall be forced to discuss the Estimates with my constituents at Cardiff, as I shall not be allowed the privilege of discussing them in Parliament. I have not the slightest doubt that, if the House passes this proposal, the time is not far distant when it will have to repeal the legislation it is now about to carry out.

MR. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.): The hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) said that if it was in the power of a Minister to come down to the House and obtain a Vote in Supply without adequate discussion it would result in a wasteful expenditure, and in the country being committed to a course of policy abroad of which Parliament might disapprove. I ask the House, for the very reasons which the hon. Member has himself given, to emphatically reject this proposal. Put the converse of his argument—which is the greater danger, that a servile House might give to an autocratic Minister the resources which he asks, and give them after inadequate discussion, or that demands indispensable for the Public Service might be delayed by destructive and dilatory opposition? There is another point in his argument which I also adduce to the House as a reason for the rejection of the Amendment. The hon. Gentleman quoted an observation of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the

Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) — namely, that he objected to give a blank cheque to Lord Salisbury. My commercial training leads me to give a blank cheque to no one; but if I am to choose between persons to whom I would give a blank cheque, I would rather give it to anyone high in the confidence of the Crown, such as a Prime Minister, or anyone else who was at the head of affairs, than to any hon. Member with 85 supporters, who might use it in a way detrimental to the interests of the country. The arguments of the hon. Member I adduce, therefore, as the strongest reasons for the rejection of this Amendment.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cohen) on being prepared to give a blank cheque to a nobleman, rather than to the whole of this House.

MR. LIONEL COHEN: I said I would rather give a blank cheque to whoever may be at the head of affairs, rather than to any one individual who might be able to enlist 85 supporters.

MR. LABOUCHERE: A nobleman is at present at the head of affairs, therefore, I do not think I misrepresented the hon. Gentleman. It appears that the Prime Minister wishes to transpose the old proverb, for he says we ought to take care of the pounds, and the pence will take care of themselves. If we assent to the proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), we shall never be able to take care of the pence or the pounds. I have, however, risen for a pacific object. It is to ask some Gentleman on the Treasury Bench to be good enough to explain to me something about this Rule. I want to know whether, supposing a Vote is proposed, say of £100,000, and if it is divided into a series of items, and if, after a somewhat lengthy discussion on the first item, the closure is proposed and adopted, would the Vote be taken upon that particular item, if there is a Motion for the reduction of the Vote by that item, or upon the whole Vote, would the closure preclude other Amendments upon the Vote? That is what I should like some Gentleman on the Treasury Bench to explain.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The question just put by my hon. friend (Mr. Labouchere) will have to be an-

swered, and answered very decisively. I shall repeat the question of the hon. Member, but, before I do so, I wish to say that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) was distinguished by remarkable poverty of fact, and that the right hon. Gentleman made up for that poverty by what I may call an unsuspected force of imagination. He said that we have been occupied in Committee of Supply for several hours in discussing the wages of a charwoman. If that is so, that charwoman would become historical. I challenge, or perhaps I ought to say, I invite the right hon. Gentleman, or his Colleagues, to verify that observation, or anything like it, by reference to the records of the House. I have had as much experience for some years past of Committee of Supply as the right hon. Gentleman; and I say without fear of contradiction that whenever the Irish Members have extended the time of discussion of Estimates relating to Ireland principles of vital moment to the liberty of Ireland have been involved. My hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell), in language of great significance, has spoken of the immense importance which the question of Supply acquires from the relation it bears to the present disturbed condition of Europe; and I warn the House that, with a Minister at the head of affairs like Lord Salisbury, who has been called the perturbator of this country, that if it relaxes its grip over the public purse by adopting this Rule without modification, the Government of the day may, at any moment, drag the country blindfold into a European war. I would ask the House to remember that the most conspicuous Member of the Government—namely, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), lately left them on a question of economy, because he considered that the Estimates for the year, which are directly concerned in the Amendment, are swollen beyond the demands of public property and the capacity of the country to provide for them. The people of this kingdom at large will think it very strange that the next step of the Government, after having been deserted by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, is to endeavour to gag the Representatives of the people in discussing the Votes in Committee of

Supply. Once more, I ask what is the use of loading the Chairman of the Committees with powers—which will not be powers, but burdens—when the fact is notorious that he has not employed those powers already in his possession? The present Chairman of Committees has never had occasion to warn Irish Members for irrelevance or tedious repetition, although British Members have fallen under his lash for both those offences more than once. I see the late Chairman of Committees (Mr. Raikes) sitting on the Treasury Bench, and I would press upon him the inquiry of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), as to how the proposed Rule will operate with regard to Votes in Supply which are generally divided into various sub-heads embracing a great many separate items. If the *clôture* is applied to one Amendment, it will cancel all the other Amendments to the Vote under consideration. A Division will take place upon the Amendment, then the *clôture* can be at once applied on the question of the Vote. A Division can be taken, and in that way, in the space of time that would be occupied by four Divisions, the Government can compel the House to grant them millions of money. I submit that the question of the hon. Member for Northampton should be answered not curtly and cursorily, but fully and precisely, before the House proceeds another inch with the discussion of this Rule. At a moment when the question of economy has been brought into prominence, and the Estimates will require fuller and more careful consideration than ever, the Representatives of the people should not have their traditional check upon the expenditure of the country reduced to a meaningless and empty form, but should be able to exercise efficient control over the policy of the Government.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I think that, with all the acuteness the hon. Member always brings to bear upon the unravelling of complicated propositions in this House, he has, on the present occasion, rather failed to make out his case, or to render it sufficiently plain to anyone who has studied the proposed new Rule. The proposal of the Government makes no substantial

difference in the existing regulations of debate. It differs, I think, from the existing Rule merely in being a little more particular, definite, and clear. If the new Resolution is used to deal with a particular Amendment the Chair will be appealed to by an hon. Member, and the consent of the Chair having been obtained, leave will be asked to put the Question. This differs from the existing practice in so far as the initiative is not taken by the Chair, but by some hon. Member with the consent of the Chair. The hon. Member has, I think, magnified the danger, not fully recognizing how important an element is the necessary previous consent of the Chair, and I ask the House, whether it is possible that the Chair could be occupied by a public servant who would be guilty of such disgraceful practices as would be involved in forestalling the introduction of any fair Amendment in the manner indicated?

DR. COMMINS (Rosecommon, S.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has very cleverly evaded the difficulty which has been proposed, and the arguments which have been offered to elucidate it. The argument is, that under the proposed Rule the Chairman of Committees will have power to deal with a Vote as it stands without discussion or debate. A Minister may come down, and propose to close a debate directly a Vote is submitted, and in that way money might be voted without discussion. That would be a departure from the old principle which has always prevailed in regard to our dealings with Supply, and would, practically, be giving a Minister a blank cheque without allowing the House that amount of control and power of criticism which it has always possessed in money matters. The course the Government are taking amounts to what is known as the "confidence trick." You are to trust a Minister with the money of the country, in order to show what confidence you have in him. You trust he will take good care of it, and will give it back to you; but you find that the persons who are victims of the "confidence trick" in the streets very seldom get back the money they have handed over, and so it will be with this House.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 "That the Debate be now adjourned."—
 (Mr. J. Rowlands.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) Leicestershire, E.): I put it to the House whether the debate on the present Amendment has not proceeded long enough? Two hon. Members have put precise Questions to Her Majesty's Government; those Questions have been answered; there is nothing new to be said on the subject, and I think that now, after the time that has been occupied on the matter, the House might very well proceed to a Division.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I do not agree with the view of the noble Lord that this matter has been sufficiently debated. A very important question has been raised—whether we should consent to, I will not call it the "confidence trick," but giving a blank cheque to a Prime Minister. The Question put to the Government, if it has been answered at all, has been answered in a very unsatisfactory manner. It appears to me that we are making an appeal to the Government in regard to a trust which the country has placed in our hands, and I hope we shall have a little further discussion on the point.

MR. SCLATER-BOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I should like to ask the House whether it is really satisfied with the explanation we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Raikes). He has great knowledge and experience in the matter, and yet I must own that he did not satisfy me. It seems to me there was something in the question put by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) which was not anticipated by the Government, and which they have not provided against. I have considered the language of this Resolution as it will bear upon the clauses of a Bill. It invites this process—after an Amendment to a clause has been disposed of by the closure, the House will be asked to proceed to decide upon the clause as a whole. Further Amendments of which notice may have been given are not to be proposed, as they will be ruled out; and the same observation applies to Amendments to reduce Votes in Committee of Supply. I have prepared words to make it clear

that the effect I refer to shall no be produced as regards clauses, and they—

MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that we are now on the question of the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SCLATER-BOTH: I was endeavouring to show that there is a reason for adjourning, inasmuch as this question does not appear to me to have been sufficiently answered. I have endeavoured to meet the difficulty so far as the clauses of a Bill in Committee are concerned; but the question also arises in regard to Votes in Committee of Supply. Under the language of the Resolution it will be competent to ask the permission of the Chairman to close a debate on a Vote when the clôture has been put into operation upon one of the Amendments.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I would support the Motion for Adjournment for the reason that, as I understand it, a distinct question has been put to the Treasury Bench which the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) rose to answer, but did not answer. The question is this—Suppose it is proposed in Supply that so much be voted to Her Majesty for such and such a service, and that the amount is made up of several items against each of which there are Amendments; suppose the question before the Committee be to omit such and such an item, and suppose the clôture should be applied to the discussion on that question, would not that clôture also carry with it the clôture of the discussion on the whole Vote originally put from the Chair? I understand the reply to be that the words of the Resolution proposed would have that effect. If it had been in Order I, at any rate, should have contended that that is a fair construction to put upon these words.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will not further contest the Motion for Adjournment. I assure the House that a complete answer can be given to the question which has been addressed to the Government by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Parnell); but I am afraid that to give it now would involve rather a long debate.

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

FOYNES HARBOUR (TRANSFER) BILL.

(Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Jackson.)

[BILL 159.] SECOND READING.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee do consist of Five Members."—*(Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald.)*

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I do not know how many Members of the House are acquainted with this Bill; but I was a Member of the Select Committee which, about two years ago, fully discussed the question relating to this harbour. I think, Sir, that it would be well to have a somewhat larger Select Committee; and I hope the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) will agree to my proposal of increasing the number of Members by two—that is to say, that the Committee should consist of seven Members.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): As far as I know there is no charm in the numbers five or seven; but in this case we have followed what I believe is the usual rule with regard to the constitution of Select Committees. The hon. Member will know that all Select Committees on Railway Bills and other Bills consist of five Members, and, as I have said, we have simply followed the general rule of the House in this respect. The Bill is referred to the Committee for the purpose of enabling the authorities at Limerick to be heard before the Committee, and to state their case by counsel.

MR. M. J. KENNY: The Select Committee on the Shannon Navigation Question consisted of 10 Members. I hope the hon. Gentleman will see his way to accept the proposal that the present Committee should consist of seven Members.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Five," in order to insert the word "Seven."—*(Dr. Tanner.)*

Question proposed, "That the word 'Five' stand part of the Question."

MR. JACKSON: I have no particular fancy in the matter for having five Members on this Committee. If the hon. Member wishes it to consist of seven Members we shall not object.

MR. M. J. KENNY: I think that with five Members it is impossible to

have a fairly constituted Committee, and I repeat that the chance of having a fair Committee would be greatly enhanced if the number serving on it were increased. As the hon. Gentleman has intimated his willingness to agree to the proposal, I trust it will be adopted without further discussion.

MR. JACKSON: Our object being simply to give satisfaction, and as I have stated that I have no particular fancy that the Committee should consist of five Members, we accept the Amendment of the hon. Member.

Question put, and *negatived*.

Question, "That the word 'Seven' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to*:—

Seven inserted.

Ordered, That Four be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all petitions against the Bill, presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

COLONIAL SERVICE (PENSIONS) BILL.

(Sir Henry Holland, Mr. Jackson.)

[BILL 158.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton): Sir, I may point out that this Bill was brought in last year by the late Government, and that it has been taken up by the present Government.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to Order, Sir. I see that there is Notice of opposition to this Bill by the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare), and I ask whether the hon. Baronet is in Order in proceeding with the Bill?

MR. SPEAKER: It is a Money Bill.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL: I am afraid the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) cannot have made himself familiar with the provisions of this Bill before putting on his Notice of opposition; otherwise, his acquaintance with the forms of the House would inform him that a Money Bill may be taken at any time at night. The Bill

is introduced to remove a difficulty which prevents officers in the Colonial Civil Service accepting Governorships. That difficulty consists in the fact that their service as Governors does not count for pension, unless it extends over a period of 10 years. The object of the Bill is to remove that disability, and to enable Colonial Civil servants equally with Imperial Civil servants to earn pensions, provided that a portion of these pensions be defrayed out of the Colonial funds. I do not think it is necessary, at this hour of the morning, to occupy the House with any further explanation of the details of this Bill, which, as I have stated, was framed by the late Government and taken up by the present Government.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Having heard the arguments of the hon. Baronet in charge of the Bill, and having regard to the advanced hour of the morning; taking also into account the fact that the Bill is an important one, and consists of many clauses, I think it right to move that the debate be adjourned until such time as we can amply discuss the measure.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): It is true that I have placed a block against this Bill; but I do not think it lies in the mouth of the hon. Gentleman who proposed the Second Reading to taunt me with not having read the Bill; considering that it was his action in blocking a Bill of mine which was not printed that caused me to give Notice of opposition. With reference to the Motion proposed by the hon. Gentleman behind me (Dr. Tanner), I may say that I have a strong objection, apart from the reasons which induced me to put down Notice of opposition to the Bill, to take a measure of its importance at this hour of the morning. It may be true that the Bill was prepared by the late Government when in Office; but I would point out that that has nothing to do with the question of its being taken at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. The House has had no opportunity whatever of discussing this

measure, and I object to its being taken now, although it is a Money Bill. It seems to me to be the policy of the Government to play ducks and drakes with the money of the country.

MR. SPEAKER: I must point out that the hon. Gentleman is not confining himself to the Question before the House.

MR. CONYBEARE: I think because it is a Money Bill, there is all the more reason to adjourn the discussion, and for that reason I oppose its Second Reading at this hour of the morning.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Hon. Members know that, in the latter part of the Session, it is usual for us to sit until a late hour of the morning, for the purpose of passing various measures. But I protest that the necessity for that has not yet arisen. It is now a quarter past 1 o'clock, and the Government are proposing that we should become a reformed Parliament, and content ourselves with reasonable hours. Again we are told that this is a Money Bill; but I say that is no reason why it should be put through *sub silentio* at this hour of the morning. The hon. Baronet (Sir Herbert Maxwell) has not given us any reason why we should adopt this Bill on its own merits. He said that the present Government is responsible for the measure, which was framed by the last Government; but I submit that we should have this Bill, in the same way as others, submitted to us at a reasonable hour. With the exception of a few Members who have been kept here by the Whips, the House generally had no idea that any other Business was to come on, and accordingly the great majority of Members have left. For these reasons, I heartily agree with the Motion of the hon. Member below me, that the debate be adjourned; and I say that there is no justification or excuse for bringing the Bill on at this hour; and, further, that there is no such urgency at the back of the Bill to warrant the Government in breaking through their own regulations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I venture to hope that the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate will not be pressed. After the remarks that have fallen from my hon. Friend (Sir Herbert Maxwell), I can

only say that difficulty is placed in the way of the Colonial Service, owing to the disability which this Bill is intended to remove. There is no unfairness in the proposal; it is simply a matter of justice that, where a man has served for a certain time, he should be entitled to a pension for that service.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): The hon. Gentleman (Sir Herbert Maxwell) has not advanced a single argument in support of the Bill. He has not even given what I may call a good or intelligible summary, but only a very short summary of the provisions of the Bill. Before this measure passes a Second Reading, the House ought to know the scope and extent of it. We ought to know what charge is going to be put on the Treasury. We ought to know what is the amount of the pensions to be paid, and to what extent they may reach. The pension list is already large enough, and we are bound to examine very carefully what additions are made to it. We ought also to know to what extent the services of the gentlemen who it is proposed by this Bill to pension off may be called Imperial services. All these matters require explanation, before we can assent to the passing of the Bill. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] To cry "Divide!" does not, in the smallest degree, tend to increase our disposition to assent to the Bill. Dividing may decide the question whether we adjourn or not; but it will not decide the questions I now ask.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I do not intend to trespass long upon the attention of the House. There is no unfriendliness on these Benches to the Bill in the main; but at the same time ours is a legitimate protest to make. I believe that if the House consents to the adjournment of the debate, this Bill will pass without any substantial opposition when it comes on again. I might remind you, Mr. Speaker, if I am in Order in doing so, that there is clear evidence of the wearisomeness of the House in the yawning of the distinguished Members of Her Majesty's Government now present. I am fully persuaded it would conduce to the more pacific passage of this Bill at a future time if the Government can see their way to meet us now in a friendly spirit and agree to the Motion we now make.

Sir Henry Holland

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I venture to suggest a compromise. Whether the Bill is objectionable in substance or not, we are aware the Government could at the present moment defeat the Motion for Adjournment of the Debate; and we are also aware that under the Rules of the House the Government are entitled to proceed with a Money Bill after half-past twelve o'clock at night. I would suggest that my hon. Friend (Dr. Tanner) should withdraw his Motion if the Government will agree to postpone the Committee for some time.

MR. JACKSON: I am quite willing to accept that suggestion.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for Mid Cork withdraw the Motion for the adjournment of the debate.

DR. TANNER: I will withdraw it, Sir, but I should like to explain my reason.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no need to do that.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed for Thursday 10th March*.

M O T I O N S .

—o—

ECCELESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN WALES).

MOTION FOR A PAPER.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh) moved for a

"Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the Bishops, Chapters, and Archdeacons, &c., in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales."

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): As the Return now stands, it only applies to one year, which would really amount to a re-publication of the items which appeared in the last year's Report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The items for one year would be worthless, and unless the Return be ordered for a period long enough to allow of an adequate comparison, I will oppose the Motion. I suggest that the words "since 1850" be added to the Motion.

MR. KENYON: Such a Return as the hon. Gentleman suggests would lead to an indefinite amount of trouble which I do not think the Ecclesiastical Com-

missioners will be prepared to take. I think it would be better to adhere to my form, which has received the sanction of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): As a matter of Order, Mr. Speaker, does not the Opposition prevent the Motion being taken?

MR. KENYON: There is no Notice of objection.

MR. SPEAKER: As it is a new Motion, and the hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. E. Ellis) objects, it will have to be deferred.

Motion deferred till To-morrow.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Caldwell, Bill to amend and consolidate the Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Caldwell, Dr. Cameron, Mr. Cameron Corbett, and Mr. Graham.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 180.]
House adjourned at half after
One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 25th February, 1887.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILL — Committee —
Solicitors (Ireland) (12.)

POTTER'S PATENT BILL. SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

EARL DE LA WARR, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to revive a patent which had lapsed owing to the fees for renewal not having been paid within the statutory period of three months. This was the first case that had occurred under the Patent Act of 1883. The default was purely an accident on the part of the patentee, who had no wish whatever to evade the law; it arose entirely from his illness, his inability to transact business, and his not having given proper instructions to his clerk to pay within the time prescribed. The Comptroller had stated that the only means of remedying the omission was for the patentee to resort to a private Act of Parliament. He (the Earl De La Warr) hoped the Bill would not be opposed.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(The Earl De la Warr.)

THE EARL OF ONSLOW said, that the case was one of considerable hardship. £23,000 had been invested in the purchase of plant for the purposes of the patent. This was the first Bill asking for the revival of a lapsed patent since the passing of the Act, which required that the fees for renewal should be paid within three months. He hoped, if their Lordships should read the Bill a second time, they would give an intimation that this was not to be a precedent, and that such Bills would not be received in a future Session by the House.

LORD HERSCHELL said, that when the Act of 1883 was passed, it was hoped and expected that the enlarged time given for the payment of fees to keep the patent alive would in all cases be sufficient to prevent inconvenience and hardship. Those engaged in preparing the Act were of opinion that three months would be sufficient. The provisions, however, of the Statute could not take away from the Legislature the power of passing special legislation. This was the first case of the kind which had come before their Lordships since the passing of the Act of 1883; but he thought it ought to be understood that Parliament would not intervene in the case of persons who had failed to make payment at the proper time. Undoubtedly, the present case seemed to be one in which hardship would be inflicted if the patent were allowed to lapse, as large sums had been paid by the patentee, for which, if the patent lapsed, he would get no return. He would not oppose the Bill; but he agreed with the noble Earl (the Earl of Onslow) that it should be known that Parliament would not readily relieve patentees in this manner.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, that without offering any opposition to the Bill, he thought it right to say that there was something in the nature of an understanding that since the time had been enlarged, Bills of this kind which before had been frequent, should not be entertained for the future. There were two sides to the question of reviving patents. After the patent had expired, other persons had a right to invest their money in what might be regarded as the property of the public. It was only fair that the rights of persons who had invested capital on the faith that the patent had become public property should be regarded.

He desired to say that by way of additional warning.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS) said he was glad that this discussion had arisen on the Bill, as it would be of great use in guiding legislation. This was not the only Bill of the kind under the Act of 1883 which was likely to be brought before Parliament. There were, he believed, three persons likely to be applicants for the same indulgence if this Bill were read a second time. One of the parties had been already before him. There was a provision in the Act of 1883 which ought not to be overlooked in considering this question; and that was, that the Patent Office of the Board of Trade, under the Act of 1883, published a journal in which patents that had become void were duly published, so that intimation was given to the public that certain patents had become void. They were now at the end of February, and in September notice was given to the public that Potter's patent had become void.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^d accordingly.

ARMY—INSANITARY CONDITION OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND DUBLIN BARRACKS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE MARQUESS OF ORMONDE, in rising to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, As to the state of the drainage of the Knightsbridge Barracks; and whether the death that occurred last week of an officer of the Royal Horse Guards was in any way attributable to the defective drainage of the officers' house? said, he had been induced to bring this matter forward in consequence of the many complaints he had heard in various quarters as to the insanitary state of the barracks at Knightsbridge. Over and over again officers quartered at the barracks had reported a state of things that pointed directly to defective drainage, and it was advisable that an inquiry should be made into the matter. There had been complaints also as to the condition of other barracks in London—the Horse Guards, and particularly of Dublin Barracks, which were in a most lamentable and disgraceful state, and where several cases of typhoid fever had occurred. A well-known and gallant

officer contracted typhoid fever in the barracks but a few months ago, and died of the disease. That such a state of things should exist as was said to be the case at Knightsbridge Barracks, which had been built only seven or eight years, was most unsatisfactory, and demanded some explanation. It should be ascertained who was responsible for building the barracks with insufficient sanitary arrangements. Surely this trifling with the health of Her Majesty's troops was not to be dealt with lightly; and he would express the hope that the matter might be made one of strict investigation, not by Boards composed of Royal Engineers and barrack-masters, but by thoroughly competent sanitary engineers. The noble Marquess concluded by asking the Question of which he had given Notice.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH said, he was not surprised if the sanitary arrangements of the barracks had been overlooked, and agreed that similar matters were treated too lightly in the past, if not with carelessness; but he was not surprised if the sanitary arrangements at the barracks were defective, since, instead of having the Hospital in the immediate neighbourhood of the Barracks at Knightsbridge, it was not so; but on a less healthy site, at an inconvenient distance from the barracks—namely, at the Regent's Park. These facts were placed before the Authorities at the proper time by the Medical Officers concerned—namely, those of the Household Brigade of Cavalry.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS), in reply, said, he feared he must confine himself to the Question on the Paper. Had he received Notice that the noble Marquess intended to refer to Dublin Barracks, he would have been prepared to answer his noble Friend's Question on that point; but he was not now in a position to do so. With reference to the Hyde Park Barracks, he was happy to assure the noble Lord that there was no suspicion whatever that the drainage was defective. He had himself examined the half-yearly reports of the principal medical officer for the Home district made in October and February last, and in that document it was stated that the Hyde Park Barracks were in good sanitary order. He had also examined the

quarterly report of the regimental medical officer in charge, and the weekly reports of the same officer, and all those reports were to the same effect—that the sanitary condition and the drainage of the barracks and officers' quarters were good. It was quite true that previous to June last there were complaints, but in that month a very important improvement was carried out in connection with the officers' quarters, by which all the soil-pipes were placed on the exterior of the walls; and since that time there had been no complaints from the troops or from the officers whose business it was to inspect the buildings. With regard to the last part of the Question, although he had not received an official report on the matter, he had received private information to the effect that the medical officer who was in attendance had no reason whatever to suspect that the death of the officer referred to was attributable to defective drainage.

THE MARQUESS OF ORMONDE: Will the noble Lord inform the House whether the death was from typhoid fever or not?

LORD HARRIS said, he had given his noble Friend the best answer in his power. He would, however, add that, in the last weekly report of the regimental medical officer, it was stated that the case in question had typhoidal symptoms; but he understood that since the death the medical officer was quite satisfied that this was not a case of typhoid fever.

THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM suggested that the reply of the noble Lord (Lord Harris) was not quite satisfactory, and he asked whether it would not be better to have the buildings inspected by a competent sanitary engineer.

LORD HARRIS said, he would mention the matter to the Secretary of State for War; but he might inform their Lordships that, since the death of the officer in question, there had been an examination of the buildings by the Royal Engineer commanding the district and the regimental medical officer, and they were unable to detect any symptoms of defective drainage.

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 25th February, 1887.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DUBLIN SOUTHERN DISTRICT TRAMWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to communicate with the Corporation of Dublin in reference to this Bill, and, therefore, I object, as a matter of form, to the Second Reading being taken now.

Second Reading *deferred till Monday.*

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND) — CAMBUSNETHAN PUBLIC SCHOOL.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) asked the Secretary for Scotland, Whether a boy named Stewart lost a leg in consequence of having been pushed violently against some wooden steps in Cambusnethan Public School in May last by the assistant female teacher; whether, when the case was reported to the Procurator Fiscal, who is also clerk to the School Board, he declined to take it up; whether the School Board allowed four months to elapse before any inquiry was made; and, whether he would cause further inquiry to be made into the case?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews' Universities) (who replied) said: A boy, aged four years, attending Cambusnethan Public School did, towards the end of May last, sustain some injury to his left leg, and, in consequence of this, the leg was amputated on 1st October. It is alleged by the father that the injury was caused by his being pushed by an assistant female teacher and caused to stumble against a wooden step between two class rooms. He had been called into the room for punishment, and it is said that he received the push when returning to his own class

room. The boy went on with his work for two hours afterwards without complaint. In the evening he complained of pain in his heel. His foot was examined, but showed no signs of injury. On the following morning, as his knee was swollen, his mother sent for a doctor. The boy was ordered to be kept in bed, and a suppuration in the knee was lanced. He was allowed to get up, contrary to the doctor's orders, and thereafter secondary inflammation set in, and amputation became necessary. About a fortnight after the alleged assault, a complaint was made by one of the parents to the Procurator Fiscal of the burgh, who made an inquiry, and was satisfied that the evidence would not justify a criminal information. But as the case was one for a Superior Court, if it was to be tried at all, he referred it to the Procurator Fiscal of the county, who also formed the opinion that there was no ground for a criminal charge. An inquiry was made at the time by the convener of the School Committee, and about four months after the occurrence a letter was written by the father of the boy to the School Board, and an inquiry was made. The Board was of opinion that there was no evidence to substantiate the charge against the teacher. In consequence of another representation made by the parents to me, a careful and exhaustive inquiry was made. The evidence proved very conflicting, many of the witnesses being young children. But there is evidence that on the morning of the occurrence the boy Stewart, while running hurriedly towards the school on the ringing of the school bell, fell over a cart weighing steelyard. The fall seems to have been a severe one, as, although he rose without assistance, he was unsteady in his walk, and was seen to stagger for some distance. The doctor who attended him states that this fall would be very likely to cause the injury. I formed the opinion that there was no ground for a criminal charge, and the inquiry already made having been exhaustive, I do not intend to re-open the matter.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — ENGLISH AND IRISH OFFICIALS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked the Postmaster General, How many officers of the Post Office employed in English offices have, during the last 10

years, been promoted, appointed, or transferred to the position of surveyor's clerk, or acting surveyor's clerk, in the Irish Post Office; and, whether these promotions, &c., are reciprocal between England and Ireland; and, if so, how many officers employed in the Irish Post Office have, during the same period, been promoted, transferred, or appointed to the position of surveyor's clerk, or acting surveyor's clerk in England?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have nothing to add to the answer given to a similar question in September last, and if the hon. and gallant Member desires I will repeat it. During the last 10 years five officers have been appointed from England to be surveyors' clerks in Ireland; and four from Ireland to be surveyors' clerks in England. One of those transferred to Ireland has since died, and one has returned to England; the others are still employed in Ireland. I am unable to furnish any information respecting officers temporarily employed as acting surveyors' clerks. Those officers are merely sent out when required, and returned to their respective offices when the services are no longer needed.

MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — LURGAN BOARD OF GUARDIANS — HUGH DONNELLY, OF DERRYTRASNA, CO. ARMAGH.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If Hugh Donnelly, of Derrytrasna, county Armagh, was summoned to the Lurgan Bench on the 1st instant to eject him from his holding because he had endeavoured to obtain the benefits of the Labourers (Ireland) Act from the Lurgan Board of Guardians?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): This was a case under the Cottier Tenement Act for recovery of a house and garden. No proof was given in evidence before the Magistrates to support the allegation in the Question as to motive.

MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. H. H. WHITNEY, KINSALE UNION, KERRY.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that Mr. Henry Hungerford Whitney, J.P.,

Nohoval Cove, Kinsale, refused to allow a declaration made by John M'Donnell, of Ballyvorane, in the Nohoval Electoral Division of the Kinsale Union, for the purposes of a Poor Law election, to be taken before him; whether such refusal has had the effect of depriving John M'Donnell of the vote he would otherwise have had at the Poor Law election; and, whether the attention of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland will be called to the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I have no official information to enable me to say whether the allegations in this Question are correct or not. If any person feels aggrieved by any act committed by a Justice of the Peace in his magisterial capacity, his proper course is to represent the matter to the Lord Chancellor.

FISHERIES (IRELAND) — COLLECTION OF STATISTICS.

MR. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What steps have been taken by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries for the collection of statistics of the quantity of fish landed in Ireland, for which a sum of £350 was voted by Parliament last Session, and if the next Report of the Inspectors will contain such statistics; and, how soon that Report, which is directed by Act of Parliament to be laid upon the Table of the House three weeks after the commencement of the Session, will be presented?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Estimates show that the sum of £350 referred to was voted for the purpose of collecting information required by the Board of Trade, and not for any object connected with the Inspectors' Annual Report. The Inspectors have not as yet been able to do anything more in this matter than take such preliminary steps as the selection of stations round the coast, the making of arrangements for collecting statistics thereat, and the preparation of forms. The Inspectors state that their Annual Report is in active preparation, and will be presented as soon as possible. It has not for many years been found possible to lay it on the Table within the time specified by the Act, owing to changes in the law and other circumstances.

This was fully explained more than 10 years ago, in answer to a Question in the House.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (CATTLE) ACTS — OUTBREAK OF ANTHRAX IN ESSEX.

MR. BEADEL (Essex, Chelmsford) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether his attention has been called to a recent outbreak of anthrax at a farm near Chelmsford, Essex, whereby 60 out of 62 head of cattle either died or were slaughtered; and, whether the Privy Council will institute urgent inquiries as to the origin and cause of such outbreak?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): An inspector was sent to Chelmsford as soon as we were informed of the extensive outbreak of anthrax; but he did not succeed in obtaining any evidence as to the cause of the outbreak. It was stated that no change had been made in the management of the cattle, and no fodder, litter, or manure had been brought on to the farm from foreign sources. It may be remembered that anthrax depends on the introduction into the blood of the spores of a minute organism (*bacillus anthracis*); and out of a multiplicity of possible channels through which these microscopic germs may be conveyed, it is often difficult, and sometimes quite impossible, to select the actual one. I may add that specimens of the different articles of food of which the cattle partook, and some of the drinking water, are being used for the purpose of ascertaining by experiment whether they contain any of the infective matter of anthrax.

ARMY—ROYAL COMMISSION ON WAR-LIKE STORES—THE REPORT.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLET (Rochester) asked the Secretary of State for War, When the Report of the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores, of which Sir James Stephen is President, will be published; if it will contain the evidence of witnesses in full, or only in part; and, whether there is a likelihood of its being in the hands of hon. Members before the Army Estimates come on for discussion?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I would remind my hon. and gallant Friend that I have absolutely no control

over the deliberations of the Royal Commission, or over the form of their Report, and that any interference on my part would be most improper. But I am informed that they are likely to report shortly; and I will undertake that there shall be the least possible delay between the completion of the Report and its presentation to Parliament.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND) — THOMAS WALSHE, BALLYDAFF, CO. MAYO.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a boy named Thomas Walshe, 12 years of age, residing at Ballydaff, in the parish of Crossboyne, County Mayo, was on the 12th instant arrested on a warrant from Clarendon Petty Sessions Court, under a sentence of seven days' imprisonment in the county gaol at Castlebar, for having been found on the premises from which his father and family of eight were evicted, but had re-taken possession; and, why the father was not prosecuted instead of this child?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Patrick Walshe's wife and son were summoned for wilful trespass because they were found in the house after the eviction and refused to leave. They were fined 10s. each, or seven days' imprisonment in default. The reason the father was not proceeded against was that he was not found in possession. The proceedings were taken, I believe, by the landlord or agent; but I cannot see why it should have been necessary to proceed against the boy.

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC CARRIAGE ACT, 1869—LICENCES.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether there were issued in 1886 from the Public Carriage Office 4,853 licences to stage coach drivers, and 6,615 to conductors, whilst there were only 2,531 licensed stage coaches, showing that there were 2,322 drivers and 4,084 conductors holding licences in excess of the number required for the licensed carriages on each day; and, whether, in view of the long hours of labour imposed upon the *employés* of the Tramway and Omnibus Companies, he will take into consideration the expediency of restricting the issue of these

licences under "The Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869;" if so, whether he will consider the advisability of adding to the existing Rules a provision that no person shall be eligible to be licensed who has not resided in the Metropolitan Police District for at least three years, unless able to produce an authorized promise from some licensed stage carriage proprietor to give employment to the applicant, except in such cases as are deemed otherwise desirable by the Commissioners of Police?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; the figures are as quoted in the Question. I have no intention of restricting the issue of licences in the manner proposed by the hon. Member, or of adopting Rules which shall artificially limit the number of drivers.

FISHERY PIERS (IRELAND)—TOLLS ON BELMULLET PIER.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If, as he has promised that the Board of Works shall fix a Schedule of Tolls to be levied on the Belmullet Pier, for its maintenance, he will direct the Board to confer with the Inspectors of Fisheries and the principal merchants in Belmullet as to the proper tolls to be levied; and, if the Board of Works will give an opportunity for anyone interested in the matter to be heard at a meeting in Belmullet, before the Schedule of Tolls be finally adopted?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): All harbour tolls being levied, collected, and applied under the direction of the Grand Jury, the latter have invariably moved first in having the scale of tolls fixed by the Board of Works, with the approval of the Treasury. The Board of Works will give every consideration to any representation placed before them, either by the Fishery Inspectors or any person of the district.

RAILWAYS (INDIA)—EXTENSION OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Secretary of State and the Government of India intend to adopt some policy, in regard to the construction of Railways in India, differing from that

now pursued, which is, that they are constructed mainly by the Government of India, and by Companies under a Government guarantee; whether it is intended to call for offers to construct additional Railways on the latter footing at an early date; and, if so, between what points; and, what lines, and what mileage of railways, will be opened for traffic in the present year, and in each of the two succeeding years?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The Secretary of State has no intention of departing from the policy of constructing railways in India by the Government itself, or by Companies under a guarantee. Any proposal to dispense with a guarantee would, no doubt, be received favourably. It is not intended at present to call for offers to construct additional railways under a Government guarantee. I gave yesterday, in answer to a Question, the list of railways which will be opened in the present year. It is impossible to furnish a reliable estimate for the two succeeding years yet.

ADMIRALTY—THE GUARDSHIP "AJAX" AT GUN PRACTICE.

MR. MC CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to the following paragraph, which appeared in *The Weekly Dispatch* of the 20th February instant:—

"H.M.S. 'Ajax' at gun practice.

"Shameful recklessness.

"Our Greenock correspondent telegraphs: 'The Clyde guardship *Ajax*, under the command of Captain Durrant, left anchorage off Greenock on Friday morning for Chatham, where she will undergo alterations to rudder, &c., and will thereafter join the Channel Squadron previous to returning to Greenock probably towards the end of the summer. While passing down the Firth of Clyde, and when opposite Innellan, an occurrence of a most remarkable nature happened. It appears that in going down the crew of the *Ajax* were being exercised in big gun drill with the view of expending their quarterly allowance of ammunition. About half-past 10, at which time the *Ajax* was directly off Innellan, a shot was seen to issue from one of the guns of the vessel, strike the water, and then ricochet with terrific force towards the shore. It struck the ground immediately adjoining the villa of Mr. G. W. Patton, sugar merchant in Greenock, entering the earth about 10 yards from the north-east gable wall. The shot made a hole in the ground about seven feet deep, and uprooted four large trees, breaking them in pieces, and scattering the branches and

fragments all over the roof of Mr. Patton's villa, as well as over the adjoining grounds, besides covering the roof of the house with stones. Every window in the house was broken, and great rents were made in the gable walls; the house, in fact, being rendered quite uninhabitable. The force of the projectile, even after striking the ground and doing this considerable damage, was not yet quite spent, as the shot was carried about a quarter of a mile up the hill, and when it had reached the ground it rolled back for some distance down the hill. The adjoining house, occupied by Mrs. West, also suffered to no little extent. A plumber named Finlay Brown, who was employed at the house at the time, received injuries about the body which necessitated confinement to bed yesterday, and a servant girl with Mrs. Patton had her hands cut. The Board School is in the immediate vicinity of Ashgrove, and at the time of the occurrence was filled with children. A slight deviation of the shot would have brought it into contact with this building. The *Ajax* people did not apparently notice the damage that had been done, because they went on with their firing, although the other shots went in a more seaward direction. The *Ajax* is due at Sheerness on Monday;"

whether the statements made in this paragraph are correct; if so, what are the names of the persons injured; to what extent was damage done to property; whether compensation will be given by the Admiralty to the persons so injured, and also to the persons whose property has been damaged or destroyed; whether the "big gun" drill was conducted, as alleged, for the purpose of "expending the quarterly allowance of ammunition;" and, whether steps will be taken to prevent the Commanders of Her Majesty's war ships from endangering the lives of Her Majesty's subjects by discharging "big guns" at such a short distance from the shore?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is the case that when proceeding to carry out her quarterly target practice a premature discharge of one of the *Ajax's* turret guns occurred, and that the shot struck the shore in the neighbourhood of Innellan, Firth of Clyde, damaging the houses and grounds of Messrs. Patton and Henderson. Beyond the two cases referred to in the Question—those of the plumber and the servant-girl—there has been no injury to individuals, and they are nearly well. An officer sent from the Admiralty reports that no great structural injury has occurred to the buildings; but that the roof of Mr. Patton's house has received considerable damage, and the grounds have suffered a good deal. The Admiralty will give full

attention and consideration to all claims for compensation to persons or property resulting from this accident. The hon. Member may be satisfied that there was no intention of firing a shot in the direction of the shore, and that no one regrets the circumstance more than the Admiralty and the captain and officers of the *Ajax*. The premature discharge of the gun was owing to the accidental completing of the gun circuit, into the cause of which an inquiry by specially selected officers is being held. The Admiralty will take every possible precaution to prevent a recurrence of the accident.

LAW AND POLICE — REFORMATORY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, at the Hampstead Police Court, on Wednesday, 29th December last, nine girls, whose ages ranged from 16 to 18 years, inmates of the Reformatory School for Girls, Hampstead Heath, were charged with wilfully neglecting and refusing to conform to the Rules of the place, and two of the girls, aged 18, sentenced to three months' hard labour, two others, aged 16 and 18, to two months, and two others to 10 weeks; whether, on the 31st December, the three girls not sentenced were again charged and sentenced to three months' hard labour, with two others, aged respectively 16 and 17; if, on both occasions, the only witnesses available were their prosecutors; and whether the Reformatory is under Government supervision; and, if so, whether the Inspector has issued a Report for the last three years?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir, the facts as stated in the hon. Member's Question are substantially correct. The evidence of the officers of the Institution, who were the prosecutors, was corroborated by the independent testimony of several members of the Committee of Managers, who were called in to quell the disturbance. The Reformatory is under Government supervision, and has been regularly visited by the Inspector and reported upon in his Annual Report. In this particular case a special Report was made by the Inspector.

Lord George Hamilton

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — BUILDING GRANTS TO SCIENCE SCHOOLS AND ART SCHOOLS.

MR. L. FRY (Bristol, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether the Education Department has taken any steps in pursuance of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, with respect to grants in aid of Science Schools and Art Schools; and whether, having regard to the answer to a question in this House on this subject, given on the 17th May last by the then Vice President, he is able to state that such recommendations are likely to be carried into effect?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The Science and Art Department brought the matter before the Treasury in May last, and again in November, urging (1) the abolition of the restrictions by which building grants can only be made to Science Schools built either under the Public Libraries' Act or in connection with a School of Art; and (2) the increase of the limit to which both Science and Art building grants may be made up to a maximum of £800; but the Treasury were not convinced of the necessity for the proposed changes. The question forms part of the larger one as to the amount and method of the general encouragement that can be given to technical instruction, which is now engaging the careful attention of the Department.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether he and his Colleagues will continue to urge on the Treasury the recommendations of their Predecessors?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE said, he should not be afraid of bringing the matter before the Treasury; but this was part of a very large question, which had to be considered as a whole before any decision could be come to.

MR. WOODALL gave Notice that on Monday or Tuesday he would put a further inquiry on the subject.

POOR LAW—CASE OF JAMES WESTBURY, AN AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called

to the case of James Westbury, an old Gloucestershire agricultural labourer, whose case was decided by the Cirencester Bench of Magistrates on Monday last, the 21st; his son, a corporal in the Coldstream Guards, having met with an accident in the performance of his duty through an accidental explosion, was discharged, and is an inmate of the County Lunatic Asylum; the father was ordered by the Guardians to pay a contribution of 1s. 6d. a week towards the support of his son, and has for two years actually paid 1s. a week, exhausting, in so doing, £3, all his savings, and obtaining £2 from his friends; and that, being unable to continue to pay, he has been summoned before the magistrates, and is now ordered to pay 6d. a week; it was proved by sworn evidence that his wages are now only 9s. a week, and for the past 12 months have only averaged 10s. 7d. without deducting three weeks when he was ill and unable to earn anything; and, whether he will consider the desirability of amending the Act of 43 *Elizabeth* c. 2, so as to prevent contributions being enforced on the very poor?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have made inquiry as to the facts of this case. James Westbury, who has no wife or other person dependent on him for support, was summoned before the justices to show cause why he should not contribute towards the cost of the maintenance of his son, who is an inmate of the County Lunatic Asylum. From the evidence of the relieving officer it appears that Westbury in May, 1885, informed the relieving officer that he could not pay 1s. 6d. per week towards the cost, but was content to pay 1s. per week, and the Guardians assented to the arrangement. This sum he paid until a few weeks since, when he was advised by the solicitor in the case not to continue the payment, and in consequence of his refusal to do so this application was made to the justices. Westbury, however, in his evidence, denied that he had expressed his willingness to pay the 1s. per week. As to his earnings, his employer stated that from June to December last his average weekly earnings were 11s. 3d., and that his earnings were now 9s. per week. When he was on special work he earned more. The justices, taking into consideration the earn-

ings and the statement of Westbury as to his expenses, were of opinion that he was of ability to pay 6d. a week, and made an order accordingly. With reference to the liability of a person to contribute towards the maintenance of a relative who is relieved at the cost of the poor rate, as liability under the existing law only arises in the case of a person who the justices who make the order consider of sufficient ability, the Government do not contemplate any amendment of the law.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Does not the Local Government Board think it its duty to protest against this harsh enforcement of the Poor Law against the very poor?

MR. RITCHIE: Of course, the Local Government Board are very sorry to see a harsh enforcement of this or any other law. The hon. Gentleman will see that the Act imposes a duty on the justices to say whether or not an individual is able to contribute; and it must be remembered that a large number of people who have to contribute to the poor rate are themselves not very far removed from pauperism. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that the interests of the ratepayers should be duly considered in the administration of the Poor Law.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth): Is it not possible that the War Department might be induced to contribute something towards the young soldier's support?

MR. RITCHIE said he had not communicated with the War Office on the subject.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM said, that so unsatisfactory was the answer of the right hon. Gentleman that he should call attention on an early day to the whole question.

EJECTMENTS (IRELAND)—AT KNOCKMOYLEEN, BALLYCROY, CO. MAYO.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at Knockmoyleen, Ballycroy, County Mayo (close to the Island of Achill), the landlord, Sir A. E. Bellingham, has served 15 tenants with ejectments on title; whether only 10 of the 15 were able to afford to enter defences at the last Quarter Sessions at Ballina; whether the Chairman at once granted dismisses, and refused to grant decrees for posses-

sion even in the undefended cases; whether the landlord has intimated his intention to appeal to next Assizes at Castlebar, and to the Superior Courts if not successful at Castlebar; and, whether, after the decision at Quarter Sessions, the circumstances of these cases warrant an inquiry?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The hon. Member does not give me any time to make myself acquainted with the facts of the matter. However, it does not appear to me from the Question that there is any ground for an inquiry. If the Chairman found in favour of the tenants, the landlord has a right to appeal.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—LISTOWEL, CO. KERRY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true, as reported in the Press, that when eight men were brought before Mr. Massey and Mr. Gerald M'Elligott, at Listowel, on Saturday last, charged with moonlighting in the neighbourhood of Castleisland on the 12th instant, the magistrates named declared themselves satisfied that the accused were not moonlighting but were only on their way to a wedding; but that owing to the state of the district they (the magistrates) would bind them over to the peace for 12 months; whether he will state under what statute the magistrates' decision was given; and, whether any appeal lies against this decision in this case?

MR. STACK (Kerry, N.) said he wished to supplement the question of his hon. Friend by asking the Chief Secretary whether attendance at a wedding was an offence known to the law?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I am not aware that it is; but weddings are not generally held in the middle of the night. A party of men wearing masks and other disguises were met at night by a police patrol in the Listowel district, where there has been a good deal of moonlighting. The men were arrested and brought before the magistrates, who bound them over to keep the peace. The proceedings were under the Act of Edward III., and no appeal lies against the decision. It is not a fact

that the magistrates expressed themselves satisfied that the accused were only on their way to a wedding. I am informed that they expressed no opinion on the subject.

NAVY—STRANDING OF THE GUNBOAT "FIRM"—SIR WILLIAM THOMSON'S DEEP SEA SOUNDING-MACHINE.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the noble and gallant Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), Whether, in view of certain statements made at the recent Court Martial on the stranding of the *Firm* gunboat in the January gale, relative to her inability to take deep sea soundings owing to the state of the sea and the non-supply of Sir William Thomson's Deep Sea Sounding - Machine, now generally carried in all ocean-going steamers, he will confer with the other Naval Lords of the Admiralty as to the advisability of recommending that the said valuable sounding-machine be supplied to all Her Majesty's sea-going ships, irrespective of whether it has been applied for by Commanding Officers or not?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON), (Middlesex, Ealing) (who replied) said: Sir William Thomson's sounding-machine is only applied to the larger types of ships and to vessels with very high speed. Certain improvements in the machine have been suggested, and are under trial. Until these are completed there is no intention of extending its issue to the smaller classes of ships.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—GRANGE-GEITH POST OFFICE.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Postmaster General, When the proposed inquiry will take place as to the Grangegeith Post Office?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): If the hon. Member will communicate with me further in a few weeks' time, I will be in position to answer the Question?

MR. O'HANLON asked, was it possible, after so many promises had been made, that it took two or three weeks to institute an inquiry into a matter on which the people—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

INCOME TAX—MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT.

CAPTAIN SELWYN (Cambridge, Wisbeach) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether husbands and wives derive any benefit, except in the matter of Legacy Duty, to compensate them for being treated, notwithstanding the Married Women's Property Act, for Income Tax purposes, as one person?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Yes; they would have a parallel advantage in the case of Succession Duty, as in the case of Legacy Duty. I must protest against the inference of husband and wife being treated as one person as regards taxing purposes. I cannot see, because in a particular household there may be two purses instead of one, that the household should be held less liable for taxation than any other household.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—MANUFACTURE OF MACHINE GUNS AT ENFIELD.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of Ordnance, Whether the Report of the Select Committee on Machine Guns, presented to Parliament in May 1881, which recommends the adoption of the Gardner rifle Machine Gun for use in Her Majesty's Service, in preference to either the Gatling or the Nordenfelt, has been acted upon; and whether, in spite of that recommendation, a large number of Nordenfelt 5-barrel rifle Machine Guns have been since then, and are now being, manufactured at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield Lock?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The Report of this Committee and all other Reports on Machine Guns have been carefully considered by the War Office and Admiralty. The Admiralty have now, either completed or in process of manufacture, about twice as many rifle calibre Gardner guns as they have Nordenfelts. The War Department has a still larger proportion. All these Nordenfelt guns that have been supplied to the Admiralty have been supplied by special request of that Department. As regards the last part of the Question, a number of 5-barrelled Nordenfelt guns are in course of manufacture at the Royal Small Arms

Factory at Enfield to comply with naval demands with the least possible delay. I should, perhaps, add that a considerable number of Gardner guns have also been manufactured at Enfield.

ARMY—THE ROYAL ARTILLERY—RU- MOURED REDUCTION OF THE FORCE.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, and, if so, to what extent, it is proposed to make any practical reduction in the forces of the Royal Artillery in men, guns, or horses?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The changes ordered in the establishment of the Royal Artillery have for their object the most effective organization of that Force for the defence of the Empire. Taking all branches of that Service there will be an increase, not a decrease, of 278 men. The apparent decrease in guns is 28, owing to the batteries not belonging to the First Army Corps being put upon a peace footing of 4 guns; but, in the event of war, they would be immediately expanded from the Reserve into 6-gun batteries. The diminution in the number of horses is 334; but corresponding additions have been made to other branches of the Service, so that the total number of horses for the Army remains practically the same.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS FOR 1886— THE RETURN.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, When the emigration statistics for 1886 (which were laid upon the Table a fortnight ago) will be circulated?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): It is hoped that the Return in question will be circulated within a week.

CORONERS' INQUESTS—VIEW OF THE BODIES.

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop's Auckland) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, considering the painful nature of the process of viewing dead bodies at coroners' inquests in cases of colliery explosions and accidents, he will take any steps to enable a coroner to relieve the jury from this obligation, when sufficient evidence is forthcoming of the identity of the deceased?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have no power to dispense with the obligation imposed by law from a very early period on a coroner's jury to proceed only on view of the body; and I should not feel justified in recommending to Parliament any such proposal as the hon. Member suggests. Where numerous deaths have resulted from one accident it is usual to hold an inquest on one or two only of the bodies.

EVICCTIONS AT BURRADON COLLIERY, COUNTY NORTHUMBERLAND.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can give the House any information respecting the recent evictions at Burradon Colliery, in the county of Northumberland; and, whether it is true that the workmen evicted offered to pay rent for the houses which they occupied, and their offer was rejected?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; I have no information respecting these evictions, and I do not see that it is a matter in which the Secretary of State can interfere. I understand that the colliery in question has ceased to work some time since.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS—CARDIFF TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the National Debt Commissioners paid interest on the sum of £160,000 standing to the credit of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank up to September 1886; whether the Trustees of that Bank refused to allow any interest to depositors after 20th November 1885, nearly a year previously; and, whether the amount so received, as interest on deposits from the National Debt Commissioners, was devoted to partially replacing the deficiency caused by the frauds of the actuary of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): There has not been time to ascertain the facts; but I am authorized to state that the Government will willingly lend any assistance to any representations regarding an alteration

of the law which will prevent such a catastrophe as has occurred. The Government will be most happy, while endeavouring on the one hand to avoid any interference with Societies of this kind, on the other hand to give any assistance in the way of increased securities in their power.

"BOARD OF TRADE JOURNAL"— ADVERTISING AGENTS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it is a fact that advertising agents are being employed to collect advertisements for *The Board of Trade Journal*; what saving in the cost of its production is effected thereby; and, whether it is intended to develop this new line of Government enterprise?

THE SECRETARY (BARON HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Messrs. Judd and Company have contracted with Her Majesty's Stationery Office for the privilege of advertising in *The Board of Trade Journal*, and in that capacity receive advertisements. It is hoped that by this contract and the sales of the copies the cost of production will be defrayed. There is no intention of bringing out another journal.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is this the sole privileged firm; and, if so, what are the terms?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS said, he could not answer the Question without Notice.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881— COUNTY COURT RULES.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the County Court Rules made on the 10th September 1881, in consequence of the provisions of "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881," section 51, are still in force; and, whether any other Rules regulating the mode of service of Civil Bill processes have since been made under the provisions of said enactment or otherwise?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The Rules referred to are still in force.

QUEEN'S PLATES.

MR. MILDMAY (Devon, Totnes) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, seeing that the Queen's

Plates (professedly granted to encourage the breeding of horses in this country), in view of the poor contests they have provoked of late years, entirely fail of their object, he will consider the advisability of applying the sums voted for this purpose in some way which shall more effectively carry out the original object for which the Queen's Plates were granted?

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I rise to Order. I wish to ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whether this Question is not of an argumentative character? Does it not assume a point which has been very frequently argued in this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The Question certainly does assume that Queen's Plates have entirely failed of their object. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman objects to it, that may be omitted from the Question, and the remainder may be asked.

COLONEL NOLAN: I object to it in that form.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton) (who replied) said: Without entering upon the argumentative part of the Question, I may be allowed to inform the hon. Gentleman that we are making inquiries into this matter, and it will be referred to the consideration of the proper authorities.

INDIA—PENSIONS FOR GENERAL SERVICES—AMOUNT PAID IN ENGLAND.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he can state the total amount of pensions paid in England for Indian services during the past financial year, distinguishing the totals paid respectively to retired covenanted civilians, military officers, and officers of the uncovenanted service; whether the pensions of Indian covenanted civilians and military officers are fixed and paid in sterling currency; whether all uncovenanted service pensioners, drawing their pay in England, are paid in rupees at the rate of exchange fixed between the Treasury and the Secretary of State; and, what was the total sum in rupees of uncovenanted service pensions paid in England during the last financial year?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The total amount of pensions paid in Eng-

land for Indian services in 1885-6 was £2,032,905, made up thus:—Covenanted civilians, £428,817; military officers, £1,459,593; officers of the uncovenanted service, £81,219; others (*i.e.*, High Court Judges, Indian Navy, Bengal Pilot Service), £63,276. The pensions of covenanted civilians and military officers are fixed and paid in sterling currency. Uncovenanted service pensioners who elect to draw their pensions in England are paid at the rate of exchange annually fixed between the Treasury and the Secretary of State, except in a few cases in which pensions fixed in sterling have been specially granted. Excluding these special pensions the total sum in rupees of uncovenanted pensions paid in England during 1885-6 was Rs.9,20,000.

INDIA—TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he is aware that telegraphic messages from England to Australia are charged, from Bombay to Madras, 500 per cent more than local messages over the same lines; and, will he take steps to remedy the grievance?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Telegraphic messages are charged from Bombay to Madras, 75 centimes per word. Local messages are charged, if urgent, 45 centimes; if not urgent, 22½ centimes. The Government of India object at present to incur the loss of revenue which a reduction of the rate on Australian messages would cause.

GRANTS TO MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to adhere to the promise given in 1885 by the Government of the day, on the Vote for an Annuity to the Princess Beatrice, that a Committee should be appointed to consider the question of Grants to Members of the Royal Family?

THE FIRST LORD (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I only saw the Question on the Paper to-day, and on a question of this character I must ask the hon. Member to afford me an opportunity of conferring with my Colleagues. I will state the course the Government will take very shortly.

AFRICA (SOUTH)—PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS—LORD SALISBURY'S LETTER IN "THE TIMES."

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): In the interests of our fellow-countrymen in South Africa, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the letter in *The Times* of Tuesday, bearing the signature of the Marquess of Salisbury, is authentic?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The letter referred to by the hon. Member is authentic. The language clearly indicated that the Marquess of Salisbury regretted and deprecated the feeling which, however, the occurrences of the last few years led him to believe existed in the minds of many Members of Parliament; but that he thought the existence of such a feeling should be noted.

MR. O. V. MORGAN: Arising out of that answer, may I ask whether the opinion expressed in the Marquess of Salisbury's letter is also the opinion in general of Her Majesty's Government?

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): Before that Question is answered, may I ask whether the Marquess of Salisbury's letter was marked "Confidential?"

SIR HENRY HOLLAND: I have stated, fully and clearly, I hope, the effect of the language of the Marquess of Salisbury's letter, and there can be no doubt that that is also the opinion of Her Majesty's Government.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question whether the Marquess of Salisbury's letter was not marked "Confidential."

SIR HENRY HOLLAND: That, Sir, I am unable to say.

PUBLIC BUSINESS—COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) wished to say, in reference to a Question put yesterday by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), that Her Majesty's Government, considering the exigencies of the Public Service, thought it necessary to ask the House to go into Committee of Supply on the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates on Monday next.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, that as the right hon. Gentleman had said yesterday that he would only answer this Question on Monday, it had been assumed by hon. Gentlemen that the Estimates would not come on on Monday. He would like to ask when the Supplementary Estimates on the Army and Navy would be delivered? They were already near the close of the financial year, and these Estimates were not yet delivered. He also took this opportunity of giving Notice that, having regard to the enormous figure of the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates, he would call attention on these Estimates to the great increase of expenditure beyond that which was estimated at the time of the Budget, and especially to the vast increase of the expenditure on the Post Office and Telegraph Departments.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked in what order the Estimates would be taken?

MR. W. H. SMITH replied that they would be taken in the order in which they stood on the Paper.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) expressed a hope that the Postmaster General would, before the Civil Service Estimates came on for discussion, lay upon the Table a statement concerning the financial results of *6d.* telegrams.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University) said, he thought it would hardly be possible to lay such a statement on the Table on Monday; but he hoped to give the right hon. Gentleman and the House full information on the subject.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE said, it would be very convenient if the right hon. Gentleman would circulate a statement before the discussion.

MR. RAIKES said, he would see what could be done; but he could not promise anything.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE appealed to the Government not to bring on the Civil Service Estimates on Monday, as many Members had been under the impression that an important discussion upon the Rules of Procedure would take place that evening, and had made their arrangements accordingly.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he was not anxious to bring on the Supplementary Estimates on Monday; but a representation had been made to him privately last

evening to the effect that it was felt on the other side of the House that sufficient time would not be allowed for the discussion of the Supplementary Estimates if they were not brought forward at once. Therefore, he felt bound to afford a sufficient opportunity to the House to discuss those Estimates. He would be glad if the House would proceed with the other pressing Business on Monday; but it was for the House to say whether they would not think it right, under the circumstances, to proceed with the Estimates.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, it so happened that he was much struck by the lapse of time which had occurred without the Estimates being brought forward; and, remembering his rather sore experiences in former days over the Supplementary Estimates, he had become alarmed lest Her Majesty's Government, in their desire to press forward the Rules of Procedure, should get into some legal embarrassment with respect to the dates necessary to be observed. He therefore thought his right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) would feel that this consideration of legality ought to overbear all consideration of inconvenience.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, that, in answer to the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), he had to say that, owing to the change which had been made in the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, his right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen) felt it right that he should be at liberty himself to examine the Estimates for the Army and Navy, and that some little delay had therefore occurred in presenting them to the House; but they would be presented in the course of a few days.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL asked if the Government had decided yet as to whether there would be any Supplementary Estimates in connection with the expenses incurred in Egypt?

MR. W. H. SMITH replied that there would be no delay in giving full information to the House.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACTS—REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the Evidence taken by the Irish Land Acts Commission would be placed in the hands of Members; and, also,

when the Supplementary Report, which he believed was being presented by Mr. Knipe, would be supplied?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, the hon. Member was, doubtless, aware that Her Majesty's Government were not in possession of the Evidence. It was in the possession of the Commission, and had not yet been delivered to Her Majesty's Government. No time would be lost in presenting it to Parliament when it had been received. The Supplementary Report of Mr. Knipe, one of the Commissioners, had not yet been delivered to Her Majesty's Government, and he was unable to say when they would receive it.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FIFTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended,

"That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

And which Amendment was,

In line 1, by inserting, after the word "Question," the words "other than a Vote in Committee of Supply."—(Mr. Parnell.)

[Fifth Night.]

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Debate resumed.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I was much interested in the arguments used on the Tory Bench last night against the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and I propose to give the House the benefit of the opinions that were expressed by various Members on that same Bench in 1882, when this very Motion was before the House. At that time new Rules of Procedure had been introduced into this House by the then Liberal Government, and they were opposed by the then Opposition, which now constitutes Her Majesty's Government. The opinions which right hon. Gentlemen opposite then expressed were identical almost in the very words with the objections which have been raised on this side of the House against the Rules now proposed. One of the Rules was to the following effect—that when it shall appear to Mr. Speaker, or to the Chairman of Ways and Means in a Committee of the Whole House during any debate, that the subject has been adequately discussed, and that it is the evident sense of the House or of the Committee that the Question be now put, he may so inform the House or the Committee, and if a Motion be made "That the Question be now put," Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall forthwith put such Question, and if the same be decided in the affirmative, the Question under discussion shall be put forthwith. This is followed by a proviso which it is not necessary that I should read at present. An Amendment was proposed by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, then an active Member of the Conservative Party, and a Gentleman who received a high official appointment when the present Government came into Office. His Amendment was to leave out the words, "or to the Chairman of Ways and Means in a Committee of the Whole House;" and that was practically the proposition under the consideration of the House last night. I should like now to call attention to the Gentlemen who supported Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Motion. One of the principal supporters of that Motion to prevent the clôture from applying to Committee of Supply was the present Under Secre-

tary for India (Sir John Gorst), who made a powerful speech against it; Lord Ashbourne, then Mr. Gibson, made one of his strongest speeches in support of the Amendment; and on that occasion the Liberal Government entered into a conspiracy of silence, just as a conspiracy of silence has now been entered into on the Conservative side of the House. Mr. Gibson said—

"He was very glad that at last they had had a speech from the independent Benches on the opposite side, for if there was not a conspiracy of silence, or a confederacy of mutes on the other side of the House, there was, at all events, an extraordinary coincidence which brought forth no debate."—(3 *Hansard*, [274] 225.)

That is the position of the opposite side now. That Amendment was lost, and then I find from *Hansard* that another Member of the Tory Party proposed an Amendment. This is what *Hansard* says—

"Mr. Slater-Booth then moved as an Amendment of the proposed 1st Resolution in line 2, after the word 'House,' to insert the words 'not being a Committee of Supply.'"—(*Ibid.* 252.)

That right hon. Gentleman was at the time an ardent Member of the Tory Party; and it is as a staunch supporter of the Government that I presume he now opposes the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork to exclude Committee of Supply from the process of the clôture.

MR. SLATER-BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): What I said last night, in so far as I said anything at all, was rather in support of the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. MOLLOY: I quite understand that; but I was referring to the Amendment proposed in 1882. I am not at all finding fault with the right hon. Gentleman, who, if he is consistent to-day, is about the only Member of the Tory Party who is. What did the present Chief Secretary, then speaking from the Benches, say? He spoke of the right of free discussion in Committee. He called "the privilege of debate in Supply the proudest privilege of the House," and in a long speech he supported the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and spoke in the strongest terms against the Resolution to include Committee of Supply in the Clôture Rule. Then *Hansard* gives us a long speech from the hon. and gallant

Member for Horsham (Sir Walter Barttelot), who also spoke strongly in favour of the Amendment; but I need not quote his remarks. I come now to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury and the Leader of the House of Commons. He said that—

“It was certainly the case that less time had been occupied in the consideration of Supply during the last two Sessions than at any former period within his experience of 14 years of that House. Was this, then, the time to take away opportunities from Members of considering Votes in Supply? He could not imagine anything more likely to increase delay than the operation of that Rule.”

I ventured to make the same assertion; but my words had no effect. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

“The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) had taken the illustration of a Vote of Credit, upon which might depend peace or war.”—(*Ibid.* 298.)

The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that a free discussion upon a sudden declaration of war might become impossible, because it might be regarded as an act of patriotism and loyalty to put in force the *clôture*. A similar argument was used last night from this side of the House; but it had no effect upon the right hon. Gentleman, although it was simply a repetition of the argument he himself had used in 1882. But this is not all that the right hon. Gentleman said. Again quoting the words of the right hon. Gentleman from *Hansard*, I find that he went on to say—

“He believed that the proposal before them was totally unnecessary. Instead of discouraging discussion in Supply, it was the duty of the Government to encourage it. He believed that the Secretary to the Treasury would far better discharge his duty if there were more discussions than there had been. In his opinion, the result of checking these discussions would lead to a larger waste of public time than was at present the case. If a discussion was closed on one Vote, it would provoke retaliation on others, for it was not in human nature that men should have their mouths closed without finding some other opportunity to bring forward their grievances.”—(*Ibid.* 298.)

Those are strong words coming from the right hon. Gentleman, and yet he now proposes to include Committee of Supply within the power of *clôture*. I will ask the right hon. Gentleman when, where, and how he found a new salvation which enables him and his Colleagues to swallow all their old convictions? These were their convictions in 1882; where are those convictions now? The right

hon. Gentleman has given up the whole of them on this subject. Has anything happened since which accounts for his having found a new salvation? If it was wrong in 1882 to close the mouths of this House in discussing the Votes in Committee of Supply, why is it not wrong now? The right hon. Gentleman spoke then in favour of free discussion. He said that not only was discussion right, but he suggested that still more discussion should take place, and the work would be more efficiently conducted. Surely this is an extraordinary change of mind for the Government to have made on such a point. Every Member of the Front Bench opposite, except the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) and the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster), who were not Members of this House in that Parliament, strongly opposed the attempt to include Committee of Supply in the Rule of Procedure which enables the *clôture* to be applied. The late Lord Iddesleigh, then Sir Stafford Northcote, and Leader of the Conservative Party—holding the position which the right hon. Gentleman opposite now occupies—made a long speech, and adduced strong arguments in favour of the exclusion of the Committee of Supply. Sir Stafford Northcote said—

“Surely the Liberal Party ought to be content with achieving such advantages as those without seeking to prevent free discussion in Committee of Supply. He had certainly been surprised—although people were ceasing to be surprised at many things now—at the action of the Government in this matter.”—(*Ibid.* 302.)

I have given quotations from the speeches of the chief Members of the present Conservative Government, who strongly opposed the proposal to close free discussion. If I were to speak for all the evening I feel that I could not add anything to the strength of the arguments then used by Members of the Tory Party. Nothing has since transpired which can alter that opinion. It was admitted on that occasion that discussions occasionally took place upon trivial matters, and that such discussions were sometimes carried to an inordinate length. They admitted all this and a great deal more; but, nevertheless, they maintained and supported, and all of them spoke in favour of, full and free discussion in Committee of Supply. The Rule submitted then was identical with the Rule proposed by the Government now; and the

Amendment then was identical with the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork now. There is no change whatever in the position; no change except in the convictions of the Government, who are now willing to swallow all their old convictions, and to endeavour to impose still more binding fetters on the freedom of discussion in Committee of Supply.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member who has just sat down says that nothing has occurred since 1882 to justify the change of view of those who in that year opposed a Motion very similar to that now proposed by Her Majesty's Government. That is not the view of those who sit on these Benches. They think that a great deal has happened since 1882, and that the additional experience gained in the intervening time leaves no room for doubt that it is necessary to make the clôtüre applicable to Committee of Supply; not, as has been already said several times from the Benches opposite, for the purpose of stifling discussion, but in order to secure a more satisfactory distribution of the time available for discussion over the various items brought under the notice of the House in Committee of Supply. Hon. Members from Ireland never tire of repeating that the proposals of the Government are intended to act as a gag. [*Cries of "Hear, hear!" from the Irish Members.*] Yes; that is what hon. Members opposite say. Parliament, however, will probably sit for precisely as long a time as it does now after the Rules shall have been agreed to. What is hoped, not merely by hon. Members on this side of the House, but, I believe, by the great majority of hon. Members opposite, is that by the operation of these Rules the House may make better use of the time at its disposal. I should be very much surprised if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite do not take that view. We certainly should not make much progress in the direction in which they desire to go if the closure were not made applicable to Committee of Supply as well as to the proceedings of the Whole House. The Government have been accused by hon. Members from Ireland of introducing the Rule merely in order to facilitate the progress of certain prospective Bills relating to the Criminal

Law in Ireland. [*Cries of "Hear, hear!" from the Irish Members.*] Yes; but the injustice of this charge is manifest now that it is seen that the Government is determined to apply the Rule to Committee of Supply as well as to any particular Bill that may be submitted. Last night the House was left in this position. We were debating the question of applying the clôtüre to Committee of Supply, and also the special point raised by the Irish Members as to the effect of the clôtüre. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) is not in his place at this moment; but he will admit that the Government were challenged to explain the full meaning of this Rule. I will, therefore, explain what the effect of the Rule is. The Motion is—

"That, at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate. When the Motion 'That the Question be now put' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair."

That means to say, the Original Question upon which an Amendment has been moved.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): That is the whole thing.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; I am endeavouring to explain the effect of the Motion we are making, and the Rule we now propose. The Rule proceeds in these words—

"And also, if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid), That the Question, 'That the Clause stand part of, or be added to, the Bill, be now put.' Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate."

Theoretically, the clôtüre being applied, and the whole Vote being put, it would be in the power of the House—not of the Government alone—with the consent of the Chair, when an Amendment had been moved to the original sum. Theoretically it may be argued that all further Amendments may be excluded. That is so. But it was pointed out last night by my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) that that power is already possessed by the

Chairman of Ways and Means. He is perfectly competent at the present moment to decide in that way, if he thinks that it would be the proper course to take. I have explained what would be the theoretical power given under this Rule to the majority backed up by the Chairman. And now let me put before the House the other alternative. What would happen if, frightened at this theoretical possibility, the House were to refuse to pass the Rule in its present form? It would be within the competence of hon. Members to propose, with an obstructive purpose, any number of Amendments for the reduction of a Vote. Supposing, for example, that a Vote of £100,000 were proposed to be granted by the Committee for a particular purpose, it might be proposed successively to strike off £10,000, under a certain sub-head; and if that proposition were defeated, it would be possible to go on moving that it be reduced by £9,000, £8,000, £7,000, and so on. There might be no end to such Amendments. Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite will probably argue that the course which I have sketched is not one which even obstructives are at all likely to take. The reply of the Government is, that still more improbable is the fulfilment of the allegation that the Chairman and the Government would, by a rigid application of the closure, prevent a Committee from legitimately discussing the items set down in particular Estimates. We have to choose between two extreme theoretical views, and the House must come to a conclusion, looking the danger on each side fairly and fully in the face. Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have argued that it would be possible by this Rule to suppress discussion upon particular items altogether. But we have had an emphatic warning as to what would take place if that were ever done. A majority which should so attempt to use its power would be shattered in a very few weeks, and it is hardly conceivable that such action would ever be attempted even in acute Party warfare. It is scarcely to be conceived that it would ever be the wish of the majority, not only to shorten discussion, but to refuse discussion altogether on particular items. But suppose that it were so. In that case, again, you have the protection of the Chair; and what would be the posi-

tion of a Chairman of Committee if he were to refuse to the House the opportunity of discussing a matter to which serious attention had been called? If hon. Members opposite are capable of believing that it would be possible for the Chairman to rule out altogether and suppress Motions in Committee of Supply relating to important objects, I do not know that I can add anything to the explanations I have given. I want the House to consider the issue really before it. It is this—in what direction does the danger lie—does it lie in the abuse of the power of the Chairman of Ways and Means, or the abuse of the means of Obstruction which would exist, if no such Rule is passed? I fully recognize the power which is theoretically placed in the hands of a majority, and of the Chairman of Committees, by this Rule. I do not believe, for a moment, that such a case could possibly arise; but upon the balance of argument we think it wise for the House to adopt this form of clôtüre. If not adopted in this form it would be of little use to apply the clôtüre in Committee at all, because the whole power of Obstruction would still remain. Supposing an abuse were attempted by the Government, would the Chairman be likely to assent to it? The House must decide which is the more likely—a gross abuse of power by the Chairman of Committees and the Government, or a revival of that Obstruction which has been so effective in the past. If it is held that the former is the less likely, then the applicability of the Closure Rule in Committee of Supply ought to be affirmed. If there is a real desire to baffle Obstruction and to proceed regularly to work, in order to secure freedom of discussion, I trust the House will see its way to accept the proposals of the Government.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The answer of the Postmaster General last night, and the explanation which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just given, require, I think, a little clearing up. I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the Rule, as proposed, is theoretically unjust.

MR. GOSCHEN: No.

MR. BRADLAUGH: That is what I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say.

MR. GOSCHEN: What I said was that this is, of course, an extreme power

—theoretically an extreme power—put into the Resolution in order to meet the possibility of obstructive tactics, which we do not think can be regarded as impossible.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I be allowed to put, in a few words, how far that extreme theory will go. Suppose we have a Vote of £500,000 for a certain service under discussion, the Question would be that a sum of £500,000 be granted to Her Majesty for that service. That would be the Main Question put from the Chair. But the particular Vote is divided into sub-heads, and there is an Amendment to reduce it by a particular item relating to one of the sub-heads. The discussion is directed to that item, and not to the Vote generally, and the Chairman of Committees allows it to go on upon that item, which may be very small and unimportant, and altogether separated from every other item of the Vote, so that the discussion of the Amendment to omit that particular item might have no reference whatever to any other item. Suppose that a Member intended to obstruct purely for the purpose of obstructing other items in the Vote which hon. Members might legitimately desire to discuss. I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster General to convey that such a step will be possible under the proposed Rule; and, therefore, the proposed Rule will be more open to wide abuse. We have had experience more than once, and even recently, of hon. Members having put down Notices admittedly for the purpose of preventing discussion on kindred matters. I believe that hon. Gentlemen on the other side have already suffered since the Session commenced from tactics of this kind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster General say—"You will be in no worse position if this Rule is carried than you were before. The Chair has the same power now." Now, that is not the fact. What is the Rule? It is that at any time after the Question has been proposed a Motion may be made that the Question "be now put;" but, as the Rule stands on the Standing Orders at present, no such proposition can be made until the Speaker or Chairman shall be of opinion that adequate discussion has already taken place; and he is also to judge of what the evident sense of the House is. It is put to us—

Can you suppose the occupant of the Chair being guilty of such an improper practice as forestalling the consideration of a matter which would otherwise come on? I deeply regret that the Government should have put the Chairman in a position in which he can possibly come under considerations of that kind. I should be the last to suggest or imply that the Chairman would be guilty of colluding with anybody. Let me put a case. If the Chair is satisfied that a Member has been unduly prolonging discussion, and, therefore, permits a Motion to be made that "the Question be now put," having done that, he subjects other Members and other Amendments to the *clôture*, the whole matter will be at an end. ["No!"] Then it is a pity the Government do not say what it is they really mean. Of course, the words may have, and perhaps do have, an entirely different meaning. If so, it is to be regretted that they do not say what they mean. I only desire that the House should know exactly what it is doing if it votes the Rule in the way in which it is now proposed. I maintain that it would be possible for any Member to prevent a discussion on the real Question and the Original Question by raising a sham and tiresome debate on a matter of no importance at all. At any rate, the effect of this New Rule should be made plain, definite, and clear.

MR. SCLATER - BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I have been reminded that some years ago I certainly did express the opinion that the closure ought not to be applied to Committee of Supply. I have now, however, though with some reluctance, arrived at the conclusion that some restriction must be placed upon discussion in Committee of Supply; but I own that I was not prepared for so great an extension of the Resolution as the Chancellor of the Exchequer now candidly admits to be intended by the language of the Rule. No one who heard the statement of the right hon. Gentleman can doubt that the issue is a clear one, and that if the Rule is adopted without Amendment it will allow of the Leader of the House, by putting the closure in force against one Amendment, sweeping all other Amendments away. If this power were only to be exercised as at present, after the Chairman has declared that the question has been ade-

quately discussed, I might be satisfied. But the Rule is changed in this respect; and who can doubt that under pressure of Committee of Supply there will be a great desire on the part of the Government to adopt this compendious mode of disposing of Amendments? I should have preferred that the Rule should have been left as it was last year—namely, that the Speaker or Chairman would alone have authority to state that the time had arrived for the *clôture* to be put in force. With that limitation I should have been satisfied; but now we have a double function—the function of the Chair and also the function of a private Member. We are giving the Government a very dangerous mode of disposing of Amendments if they desire to make progress with Supply. If the Government really desire this power let them say so; but it certainly shows a very voracious appetite for closure, which is the more surprising to me because five Members of the Government were on the Committee with me which sat last year, and they then displayed no such voracity. I think that some words of limitation ought to be inserted in the Rule, so that the closure when applied should only apply to the Amendment then under discussion, and not prejudice the others. If these others were frivolous, then they could each be successively dealt with by the closure; but to provide this limitation some alteration of the language of the Rule will be necessary.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I am afraid we are discussing the question without clearly understanding in our own minds what is the existing Rule presuming that no change whatever were proposed by the Government. Do not the evils already exist which my right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Slater-Booth) and the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) have alluded to? I listened attentively, last night, to the statement of the Postmaster General, who was formerly Chairman of Committees, and I am bound to say that I think he stated the case not only with great clearness, but with great accuracy—namely, that under the existing Standing Order, no change whatever being made in it, it is in the power of the Chairman, if he thinks fit, to apply the *clôture* to the whole of a Vote of Supply, and at once

to put the Question. Take the case which the hon. Member for Northampton put just now—that there was a Vote of £500,000 before the House, divided into a number of sub-heads, and that an Amendment was made to omit the first sub-head and so reduce the Vote. After the debate had proceeded for some time, if it came under the description of an obstructive debate, and the Chairman put the Question, the Question put would be “that the sum of £490,000 be granted to Her Majesty.” If that were negatived he would then put from the Chair the Original Question—namely, that the sum of £500,000 be granted to Her Majesty; and, accompanying the Question with the statement that in his opinion the Question had already been fully discussed, the Leader of the House would move that the *clôture* should be applied, and the Division would be taken on the sum of £500,000. The Postmaster General was perfectly right, last night, when he stated that there would practically be four Divisions, and that in those four Divisions the whole Question would be put. No doubt, the existing Rule provides that the initiative should rest with the Speaker, whereas the present Rule does not. But this is not the point upon which the discussion now turns. It appears to me that there is no danger of any Speaker or Chairman or majority abandoning all rules of fair play. There is also the protection afforded by the fact that every Vote passed in Committee of Supply has to be re-voted on the Report with the Speaker in the Chair, so that the whole question can be fully discussed the very next night, and again upon the Appropriation Bill. There is thus very little chance of this Rule being abused. I do not believe that there is any intention of gagging hon. Members, but simply of promoting full and fair and free discussion. If the closure is ever used in any other way there will be such a tempest in the country that the repeal of the Rule would become inevitable. If you are to have closure at all it should certainly, in my opinion, be extended to all Committees of the House and to all proceedings of the House.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I believe that it is absolutely necessary to the dignity of the House that the Rule should extend to Committee of Supply; but, at the same time, I

[Fifth Night.]

am bound to say that I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hampshire (Mr. Selater-Booth) that it would not be fair to give to the Chairman of Committees the power to close all further discussion upon a Vote when one item has been clôtured. The Chancellor of the Exchequer put this illustration—that a proposal might be made to reduce a Vote by £10,000, and if that were rejected one of £9,000 might then be moved, and then of £8,000, and so on. In that case it would be quite clear that the same discussion was taking place upon each Amendment. But then the Vote might include a number of items totally distinct and separate from the one on which an Amendment had been moved. In that case it would be manifestly unfair, by the application of the clôture, to shut out the consideration of such items. I appeal to the Government carefully to consider this point and see whether some Amendment cannot be introduced into the Rule, so as to enable the different items to be taken one by one. Subject to the introduction of some such Amendment as this, I strongly support the proposal of the Government to extend the closure to Committees of Supply. It would allow the time to be devoted to more important items which is now given to trivial ones, although, perhaps, a Government is not always sorry that the time of the House should be wasted on smaller items, because more important ones which would be likely to call forth full discussion are thus relegated to the small hours of the night. When no proper consideration can be given to them, I think it is to the interest of the public service that some effort should be made to stop immaterial discussions upon the less important items in order to secure greater attention being paid to those which are more important. With this understanding I shall give my support to the Rule as it stands.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I ask the indulgence of the House to enable me to promise that the Government will carefully consider whether it is possible to introduce any words to secure the object which has been referred to. The Government desire that there should be full discussion upon every important item.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Will the right hon. Gentleman also endeavour to

secure that some words are introduced into the Rule so that there shall be a discussion allowed upon the Main Question as well as upon the subsequent items?

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I think there would be a considerable amount of dereliction of duty on the part of this House if it failed to make ample provision for the discussion of the Estimates in Committee of Supply; and I, therefore, wish to point out the circumstance which, to my mind, gives force to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). Since the Government came into Office two very distinguished Members of it have seen reason to tender their resignations, and the reasons they have assigned for the step they took has been that an unjustifiable and unnecessary expenditure was being incurred in connection with the different Departments of the State. With this knowledge before them, and also the fact that the present Government are responsible for having secured the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into what the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) described as a series of Departmental scandals—taking those things into consideration, together with the language of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), declaring that he would refuse most emphatically to give a blank cheque to Lord Salisbury, I think the present Leader of the House should take no step which would prevent the discussion of any Vote in the Estimates when the House is in Committee of Supply. My own opinion is that, when the Votes are under discussion, every hon. Member should be at liberty to call in question every single item of expenditure which shows an increase.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I think the House ought to choose the least of two evils. One thing is certain—that, if this Amendment is carried, there will be no use in having any clôture at all. I would appeal to the experience of hon. Members to say whether a good deal of the time occupied in Committee of Supply is not absolutely wasted? I do not say that much of the criticism given to the Estimates is not valuable; but I am bound to assert that it has very little practical effect, because, during the 19 years I

have been a Member of the House, I do not think that upon more than one, or, at the most, two occasions any Member who ever moved to reduce a Vote succeeded in carrying his Motion. I have been struck by the observations which were made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) as to the effect of this Rule in closing discussion on each item on a Vote; but that danger—as far as it is a danger—exists at present, because the present practices will not be changed by the proposed Rule. In fact, we must come back to this—that we must trust to the Chairman and to the justice and to the sense of the majority of the House. Indeed, I cannot conceive how any Minister or any Member of the Government could be so foolish as to bring down upon his head the odium and unpopularity which the oppressive use of this Rule would entail. What better weapon could the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) have than such an abuse of this Rule as would enable him to go back to Ireland and say that a question of vital interest to Ireland had been brought forward in Committee of Supply, and that the Chairman, and a majority composed of English Members, had refused to allow it to be discussed?

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): The right hon. Gentleman asks what would be said in Ireland if the hon. Member for Cork went there with a story that the Irish Members had been refused a discussion of their grievances in Committee of Supply? Now, I think that the Irish people are somewhat familiar with complaints of that kind, and it would be futile to go back to our constituents with that old and threadbare story. All we desire is that we should have such opportunities of discussion as we enjoy now, and that we should not be controlled by the Chairman of Ways and Means when the House is in Committee of Supply. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has said that he will carefully consider whether it is not possible to introduce words into the Rule which will prevent the *clôture* upon one item of a Vote from shutting out a discussion upon other items. Now, we had a discussion last night upon that point, and we received an explanation from the Postmaster General, and since then there

has been plenty of time to elaborate the right hon. Gentleman's explanation and re-draft the Rule. I am afraid we have no guarantee at the present moment from the Leader of the House that, if we accept the assurance he has given, he will consider the matter in a manner that will be at all satisfactory. I should like to know any instance in which a discussion upon a Vote in Supply has not been fairly and properly conducted. What we object to is that, as the Rule stands, as soon as it has been applied to the discussion of one item in the Vote, it can be applied to the whole Vote, and the discussion of other items prevented; and it is only reasonable that this result should be guarded against. I am very sorry that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Hampshire (Mr. Slater-Booth) does not see his way to vote with us on this question. In 1882 the right hon. Gentleman uttered words upon this very question which are so applicable to the present situation that I will venture to quote them. He proposed that well-known Amendment to exclude Committee of Supply from the operation of the *Clôture* Rule, and one of his reasons in support of that proposal was—

“That everyone knew what the proceedings in Committee of Supply were. They came on generally at a very inconvenient hour—at an hour of the day, sometimes, when the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. W. M. Johnson) declined to make a speech or address the House at all.”
—(3 *Hansard*, [274] 253.)

If we are to place full confidence in the Chairman of Committees there is no need to pass any Rule beyond one placing absolute power in his hands. No doubt the regular Chairman of Committees may be above Party or other improper influences; but it must not be forgotten that he is always a strong political partizan. The present Chairman of Committees, who is a Gentleman above influences of that kind, made a very strong speech last night on this very question. But if the regular Chairman of Committees becomes ill, what happens? We may have a succession of casual Chairmen—perhaps four or five in the course of a single evening, who are generally selected from the Government Benches—minor officials, who would naturally be only too delighted to do anything that would please their own Party and their own Colleagues and serve the interests of the Government of the day. Therefore, with respect to

[Fifth Night.]

such casual Chairmen, the House could not have the same confidence in them as to their impartiality. It is against that sort of abuse we are anxious to provide; and I think the Government ought to have no objection to state now what is the nature of the change they propose to make in the Rule so as to meet our wishes. The right hon. Gentleman who spoke last said that he did not remember an instance in which a private Member had succeeded in obtaining a reduction of a Vote.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN: I think I admitted that there was one instance.

MR. M. J. KENNY: And a very important instance, too. Not only are the Estimates considered in Committee of Supply, but also Votes of Credit. Some time ago a Vote of that kind, involving to some extent the question of peace or war, was brought on when the Chairman was in the Chair, and a proposal was made to grant a sum of £4,000,000 at 2 o'clock in the morning. A case of that kind might happen again, and matters of most vital importance to the country may be discussed at a very early hour in the morning when this Rule may be made the pretext for closing discussion. Debates have been prolonged because Ministers, including the Attorney General for Ireland, have declined to speak in the dinner-hour. As a consequence of such refusal and the necessary prolongation of the debate to a late hour, the length of a debate and the lateness of the hour may be pleaded as an excuse for the closure, the application of which will effectively stop debate upon Ministerial explanations. I think these are reasons which ought to induce the Government to make some alteration in the Rule. When the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) first introduced the Rule, and an Amendment was moved by the right hon. Member for North Hampshire, the right hon. Gentleman distinctly stated—

"He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman, and would be most careful of the Privileges of the House in regard to Supply; and, anxious as he was to see efficiency restored to their Procedure, he should be most jealous of limiting the right of any Member of the Committee to speak as often as he thought necessary."—(*Ibid.* 259.) That was the language of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, who was originally responsible for this Resolution—namely, that he was anxious to guard

the rights of Members in this House to discuss Votes in Supply and Votes of Credit. I think that also forms a strong reason why the Government should assent now to insert some provision in the Rule to preserve the rights of Members. In the former debate the right hon. Member for North Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth) urged the House to carefully guard its Privileges in Supply, jealously preserving the right of Members to speak as often as they desired, and it is to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman is not now prepared to maintain his former attitude.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): We have been reminded that Votes in Supply have to be reported to the House, and that the stage of Report, and also the Appropriation Bill, afford further opportunities for debate; but there is a great difference between those opportunities and a discussion in Committee of Supply; and what I want is to preserve the privilege of discussing in Committee all the items of a particular Vote. It may be possible, when the Committee are discussing the Estimates in Supply, for the *clôture* to be applied to one Amendment, and then to preclude any discussion upon the remaining items of the Vote. That is what we have to fight against, and I think we are bound to do so as Representatives of the people desirous of taking care of the public purse. I have handed a form of words to the Leader of the House, which may, perhaps, meet the difficulty; and it will be a satisfaction to the House to hear from the right hon. Gentleman what is the result of his consideration of the matter since the adjournment of the debate at the former Sitting.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): It has been pointed out that, in the year 1882, right hon. Gentlemen who now form part of Her Majesty's Government took the same line of argument against this Rule for closing debate as we are pursuing now—namely, that Committee of Supply should be excluded from it. I think it is incumbent on right hon. Gentlemen to give some explanation of why it is that to-day, sitting on the Treasury Bench, they are endeavouring to enforce upon the Members of this House Rules which they formerly strongly opposed. The only explanation which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave on behalf of his Colleagues for their change of

opinion was, that a good many things have happened since then. What I maintain is, that we ought to do all we can to induce the Members of the Government to accept some modification of the Rule as applied to Committee of Supply, even if we cannot induce them to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) altogether. If that were done it would carry out, to a considerable extent, the object which we have in view. At present we Irish Members get very few opportunities, and I am afraid we shall get still fewer in the future, of bringing important matters under the notice of the House. Under these circumstances we are bound to leave no effort untried in order to secure the continuance of the opportunities we now possess for bringing Irish grievances, and cases of injustice and maladministration on the part of the Irish Departments, under the notice of the House. Allow me to state what occurred to myself last year. I desired to bring forward a question of very great importance to my constituency when the Navy Estimates were under discussion; but an hon. and gallant Admiral, and one or two other gallant Members opposite, took the Navy Estimates into their own hands night after night, and occupied the attention of the House hour after hour. I sat here for three or four nights waiting for an opportunity of speaking upon the matter which so deeply concerned my constituents. One evening I left the House for a few moments, and while I was away the subject in which I was interested was put from the Chair and disposed of, and I had no further legitimate opportunity of directing the attention of the House to it. Now, I contend that there is no pressing necessity for including Committee of Supply in the Clôture Rule, and I will remind the House that last year there was actually less discussion in Committee than had taken place for many years previously. I would ask the Government to devise some means by which the phraseology of the first Rule may be altered by giving the Chairman power in Committee of Supply to put the question in regard to any particular item without bringing the entire discussion upon the whole Vote to a close. I should strongly object to the discussion of the whole Vote being stopped by closure on one item. I think that is a

very small concession to ask for in the event of the Government refusing to give us the whole of the Amendment which has been moved by the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): The discussion has proceeded on the line of the money voted by Parliament. Certainly, the voting of money is the most important function of Parliament, and over that a right of bringing forward grievances before granting Supply many of the greatest struggles which are recorded in the history of Parliament have occurred. I protest against the passage of a Rule by which the clôture might be brought to bear upon a whole Vote or any single item contained in it. It was my duty, last Session, to bring under the notice of a Committee of the Whole House, certain cases of hardship in the county I represent, and I made accusations of maladministration against certain officials in Ireland. Since that time many things have happened. Other chapters have been written of the history of Parliament, and I may find it my duty next Session to bring forward such cases of hardship and tyranny, and of maladministration, as may shock the ears of the British public. Now, the right of inquiry and of punishment is inherent in Parliament, and yet the First Lord of the Treasury and the Government seem to be prepared to vote away that inherent right of Parliament with a light heart. I beg most respectfully to point out that in doing so they are violating the Constitution itself. Charles James Fox said on one occasion in this House that Parliament might forbear the exercise of this right of inquiry and punishment, but that they could not divest themselves of it, because it was the very essence of Parliament itself. Nevertheless, the First Lord of the Treasury comes down here with a light heart and proposes to vote away the inherent right of Parliament and to violate the Constitution. I am surprised to find that the right hon. Gentleman opposite is so light-hearted and gay over the matter. I should rather have thought that he would be in the position of Richard III. in the play, when he found himself haunted by the ghosts of those he had murdered. I should have thought that the apparitions of all the great men who have figured in history as the cham-

pions of the rights of Parliament, such as Hampden, Pym, and Somers, would have troubled his dreams last night, and that he might have heard the exclamation—"Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow." It seems, however, that the right hon. Gentleman is not so superstitious as to believe in ghosts and dreams, even although he tears the British Constitution to rags. I maintain that it is our right to bring forward grievances in this Parliament before voting Supply. That right is a most ancient one, yet it is about to be stifled. There was one occasion in the Constitutional history of the country—in 1636 I think—when Charles I. demanded money from his Parliament, and their reply was that it would be granted when Members had settled their grievances and had received His Majesty's Gracious Answer thereto. If this *clôture*, however, is passed, it would be in the power of any Government who sits on the Front Bench to deny the right of Parliament to state its grievances, and by the exercise of the power which you are about to place in the hands of the Chairman of Committees and the Speaker of enforcing the *clôture* they will not be afforded an opportunity of stating their grievances. We have heard from the First Lord that neither the Government, the Speaker, nor the Chairman of Committees, will exercise this great power even if we should confer it upon them. Well, Sir, we have not yet had the sacred word of the King, but only the assurance of a Prime Minister who may be relieved of Office upon 24 hours' notice. I mentioned the reply of Parliament to Charles I. just now, and the rejoinder of the King was this—

"Remember that Parliaments are in my power for their calling, sitting, and dissolution, and therefore, as I find the efforts of them to be good or evil, they are to continue or not to be."

Are we, in this case, to be bound by what the Leader of the House may consider to be good or evil? I say that it is a violation of the Constitution to invest any Speaker or Chairman of Committees with power at the instigation of the Government, of the First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor, or the Prime Minister, to put a stop to full and free discussion, and thus deprive Members of this House of the first rights they enjoy under the British Constitu-

tion. As a Representative of a country which has many grievances to rectify, I desire to protest in the strongest way against the Chairman of Ways and Means being entrusted with the power of closing a discussion on any single Vote, and by that means of preventing the discussion of the remaining items of that Vote. I shall ever offer the most strenuous opposition to that proposition; but I trust the Government will see their way to the adoption of some reasonable concession. Before I sit down, I should like to call attention to the state of the Front Bench. Night after night we have complained here of an empty Front Government Bench. To-night, Her Majesty's Ministers do not feel it worth their while to keep in the House the veriest tyro among them to reply to us. They ought to remember that they may not always be sitting on that side of the House, and that the time may come when they may find the Rules which they are now passing with light hearts exercised against themselves. They will then in vain protest against the exercise of this power; they will struggle against the fetters they are forging to-day, and will regret the day when they were induced to pass Rules and Resolutions to bind up freedom of speech, and to spoil the beauty and symmetry of their own boasted British Constitution. For these reasons I strongly oppose the passing of this Rule, and I protest against it emphatically as one who has personal and general grievances to lay before the House.

MR. PICKARD (Yorkshire, W.R., Normanton): I do not rise for the purpose of making a speech, but I wish to call attention to the fact that there is not a single Member of the Government present on the Treasury Bench. I do not think that we ought to go to a Division in the absence of every Member of Her Majesty's Government. It is somewhat unfortunate that the Government do not appear to consider it necessary even to hear the suggestions and arguments proposed in the course of the debate. Perhaps I may be allowed to suggest that it is also important to except Amendments to the clauses of a Bill from the *clôture* as well as discussions in Committee of Supply.

Mr. John O'Connor (Tipperary)

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 92; Noes 261: Majority 169.—(Div. List, No. 24.)

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I rise to propose the insertion after the word "Question" of the words "not being a Question relating to the Procedure of the House." So far as we have proceeded in the discussion, the Government have steadily refused to modify in any degree the rigid application of this Rule. It is one thing, of course, to apply to discussion all the Rules which have been carried by the Government, but it is altogether another thing to apply the first of a series of Rules to check discussion on the remainder. This is not the first time that we have been engaged in considering Rules of Procedure here. When the Tory Party were in power in 1880, they passed certain Rules, and while they were under the consideration of the House there was no attempt made to restrict freedom of debate with regard to any of them. I, therefore, appeal to the Government, on their own action several years ago, to assent to the proposal I make. Again, in 1882, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was at the head of the Government, an elaborate Code of Rules was passed, the first of which was the Rule of *Clôture*; and I believe I am accurate in saying that during the discussion no attempt was made to apply that Rule to the discussions on the rest. We have now come to the third occasion on which the House has been engaged in the consideration of Procedure Rules, and I ask the Government to apply to the present discussion the principle which was applied on former occasions; and, so far as this House can determine it, that it shall apply in the future. Some of the Rules will abrogate the usages and customs of the House which have stood the test of centuries; and when we are engaged in digging up what has struck its roots so deeply into the past, and replacing it by what may strike its roots so deeply into the future, I think we are justified in asking that this Rule may not be adopted without due consideration. I venture to point out that the rights of private Members who constitute the great body of the House are

very valuable to the country; and that if Governments manage the Business of the country, the private Members are sent here to look after them. Some of these Rules enlarge the powers of the Speaker, and as I am sure that the Speaker would be slow to stop any debate that was taking place upon his relation to the Procedure of the House, so I think that the Government should also be slow to object to the full discussion of the Rules which relate to the conduct of Public Business. Further, I propose this Amendment on the ground of public expediency; for it is desirable that the discussion of Rules so far-reaching in their character should be absolutely free. I venture to say that the debates, so far, have been conducted at a reasonable length and with moderate temper, and I submit that the best way to induce a reasonable attitude of hon. Members would be to satisfy us that no attempt will be made to impose upon us, when we are upon the subsequent Rules, the drastic Rule which stands first on the Paper. With regard to those Rules, allow me to assure the Government that if when they are passed there remains the impression that they have been unfairly pushed through, it will not tend to the amicable reception of the Rules hereafter. For these reasons—on the ground of public expediency—I ask the Government to accept the Amendment which I propose. There is a French saying, that nothing is sacred from the sapper; the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House is the sapper of the Constitutional Rules of this House, and I make this appeal to him to reserve one sacred spot in the undermined arena of public debate.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "Question," the words "not being a Question relating to the Procedure of the House."—(Mr. Sexton.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member for Belfast has made an appeal to me the spirit of which I am inclined to agree to. I think this Rule should not be put in operation so as to suppress adequate discussion and check any fair opposition

to those which have not yet been considered. I should be sorry if it were supposed possible that the Government should seek to put in operation a Rule of this kind unfairly. The hon. Member has said that the Government were about to change the usages and customs of centuries; but, Sir, I submit that what we intend to do now is rather to revert to the usages and customs of the past, and that with the desire to restore to this House freedom of discussion. With regard to the Amendment of the hon. Member, it would be impossible for the Government to make any distinction whatever in the operation of the Rules with regard to time; but, Sir, the Chairman of this Assembly would, I am confident, intervene to prevent the undue application of this Rule, if a Member of the Government should seek to put it in force so as to prevent the due discussion of a question that ought to be discussed by the House. We regard the authority of the Chair as the most valuable check upon the application of the Rule; we regard it as a perfect security to the House; and although it is proposed, Sir, to invest you with larger authority, I believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite and below the Gangway are satisfied that the traditions which surround the Speaker of this House will prevent him at any time exercising the authority with which he is clothed to the disadvantage of the House, to the injury of the privileges and rights of private Members, or to the prejudice of any question which might be of interest to hon. Members in that or any other part of the House. The proposal we make will not admit of any exception. We believe that the authority with which we propose to invest the Speaker is necessary in the interest of the House, necessary to protect discussion, and necessary to prevent injury to the Public Business of the country.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Sir, I think that this is one of those questions on which the right hon. Gentleman might have shown his tact, by yielding to my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast (Mr. Sexton). It is not an Amendment which could have a very extended application, and it seems to me that where the Government are asking the House to fetter themselves for all time, the House may in return petition the Government for a little delay so that some oppor-

tunity may be given the House to exercise its remaining energies without the application of the very stringent Rule of the Closure. It has not been contended by the right hon. Gentleman that so far there has been any undue discussion or prolongation of debate on this question of Procedure; it has not been contended by him that there exists any pretext for the application of this First Rule in the discussions which have yet taken place on this Rule and the Amendments thereto. Why does the right hon. Gentleman, if he is desirous of meeting his opponents, I will not say half way, but part of the way, not seize the opportunity of making a graceful concession which would be appreciated by the House, and which undoubtedly would be reciprocated by the House? I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman is maintaining a stubborn opposition to all suggestions which are being made for any alteration or amendment of these Rules of Procedure; that he has set before himself the duty of appearing firm and steel-like in his manner and action; and that he has resolutely made up his mind to decline all amendment in order that he may build for himself a reputation as Leader of this House upon the prostrate bodies of his political opponents. I do not think such a desire will be satisfied, or that it will lead to a desire on the part of all sections of the House to forward the proceedings of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman has announced that the Government are determined to apply this Rule of Closure to the discussions on the remainder of the Rules. But will the right hon. Gentleman accompany me a little further, and consider what will be their position after having rejected this Amendment? This Rule will apply not only to our discussion of the present Rules, but also to any changes which the successors of the present Government may propose in reference to these Rules. It is known that it is the policy of the Liberal Party to make these Rules as drastic and as stringent as possible. I should have been willing to second the Liberal Party in that undertaking were it not for the fact that we have a Coercion Bill in prospect which biasses my thoughts, and sets me against Rules which otherwise I should have been glad to assist in making more stringent. I am like other men—willing to sacrifice something for

an ultimate good, although I am not sufficiently weak to fall into the trap laid for us by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. It may happen that the Liberal Party will seek to improve on these Rules hereafter and make them more drastic still; and if the Conservative Party were now to adopt my hon. Friend's Amendment they would be precluded from using this Rule for the purpose. How will it be if the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian should come into Office and try his hand at further reform in this direction in order to carry out great measures for the alteration of the Constitutional arrangements between England and Ireland; or when some great Radical at present not in a position to become an occupant of the Treasury Bench shall propose Radical measures with regard to the ownership of land? Would you not then wish that you had hearkened to my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, and thereby prevented the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and others from using the weapons against yourselves which you are now forging for us? It is a fact that when hon. Members get upon the Treasury Bench they appear to forget all those traditions of which they thought so much when they were in Opposition. These sudden changes of opinion have done much to sap my belief in the integrity of those who have governed this country; and they make me believe that there is something deteriorating in politics, and something which takes away the sense of what is fitting and due to one's self. In October, 1882, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, in speaking on the then proposals to amend the Rules, said it was better to bear patiently with Obstruction rather than make the Rules too stringent—a course that, he said, would only increase the delay in the progress of the Business of the House. The right hon. Gentleman added that he felt that the old ways were better than the proposed Rules. Not only has the right hon. Gentleman turned his back on what he said in 1882, but he has turned his back upon the proceedings of his Party before the Select Committee appointed to consider the Procedure of the House, so recently as last year. Why, then, have these changes come over the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman?

There has been no exhibition of continuous Obstruction since then which calls for that change of ground. I appeal again to the right hon. Gentleman to meet my hon. Friend in this matter. Surely, this is not so great a concession in the face of a discussion which he admits has been so fairly conducted, and which I have no wish to exceed. Surely, the right hon. Gentleman, admitting that the proceedings have been fair and within limit, and that he could not fairly have asked for the application of this Closure Rule up to the present time, will show, by his acceptance of this Amendment, that his spirit is not an obstinate and unyielding one, and that he is willing to adopt the suggestions made by hon. Members, where there is no public injury or inconvenience attached to them.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Sir, I do not think the hon. Member for Cork has dealt quite fairly with the conduct of the Leader of the House with regard to these Rules. The hon. Member has said that the right hon. Gentleman is possessed of an unyielding and obstinate spirit, and that he has refused to accept all Amendments proposed to these Rules.

MR. PARNELL: I called on the right hon. Gentleman not to show such a spirit.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I accept the correction of the hon. Member. At the same time, I wish to point out to the hon. Member that the right hon. Gentleman has, before we have passed the first line of this Rule, accepted two Amendments. Having regard to the decision at which the House arrived last night, I think we should be stultifying ourselves by accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton). After refusing to exclude questions which might affect the personal liberty of all the citizens of this country, I do not think Her Majesty's Government could assent to the proposal to exclude from the operation of the Rule questions which affect debate in this House. It is perfectly natural for the hon. Member to propose, and for the whole of the Irish Party to support, such an Amendment; but the argument by which it has been pressed on the Government that the Tory Party might soon be in Opposition, and have the closure applied to themselves, although

ingenious, supplies the very reason which compels me to vote against its adoption.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): The right hon. Gentleman has declined to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Belfast, and he has done so on grounds that are untenable. The most curious point about the statement given by the right hon. Gentleman is that it is diametrically opposed to that which he has said on former occasions. In the debate in 1882, the Tory Party supported the very Amendment which they now reject. That Amendment was proposed by one of the Members for Ireland, and it was, as I have said, supported by the Tory Party. Lord Ashbourne, then Mr. Gibson, dealing with the Amendment, said that—

"It was very advisable that they should ensure for these discussions the most perfect freedom of debate;"

and, speaking on behalf of the Tory Party, that—

"he must therefore enter a grave protest against that 1st New Rule passing in a shape that would enable it to be applied so as to fetter the absolute freedom which they ought to enjoy in the discussion of the remaining Resolutions."

I am reading from *Hansard*, vol. 274, pp. 314-15, and we have an instance of the Tory Party sitting on this side of the House in 1882, and supporting this identical Amendment; now we have the spectacle of their opposing that Amendment on the ground that it would be no infringement of the Privilege of the House to put the 1st Rule in force to close discussion on the remaining Rules.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal): I am sure the First Lord was speaking in all sincerity when he disclaimed the intention of putting this Rule in operation during the discussion of the other Rules.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I did not say it would not be put in operation. All I could say was that the Government were anxious to secure full, complete, and adequate discussion.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I do not, of course, wish to misrepresent the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I gathered that he disclaimed the intention of putting this Rule in force, at any

rate, arbitrarily or unreasonably. No doubt, that is the intention of the right hon. Gentleman; but the right hon. Gentleman will, in consequence of passing this Rule, have in his hands a very exceptional power, and at a time when the temptation to abuse it will be very strong. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has carefully taken stock of the position of the Government with regard to Public Business. We are getting towards the end of the financial year; the Government have introduced Supplementary Estimates; it is necessary to pass an Appropriation Bill, which requires a certain number of days, according to law. But before you can have the first stage of that Bill, you must have the first stage of Committee of Supply, for the opening of which, however, the Government have made no arrangement. Are we to pass these Rules before Supply is brought forward, or are they to make way for Committee of Supply? I think I hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say "Yes;" but if that be so, it is a modification of the plan originally proposed by the Government.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I think the hon. Gentleman is in some error on this point. The hon. Member is possibly not aware that it was stated earlier in the evening by my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury that Supply would be taken on Monday.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I regret my absence from the House when the statement was made. But the argument remains unaffected by it—that the Government will have in their hands an exceptionally strong power just at a time when they are under the strongest temptation to use it. We have not only as much, but a great deal more interest than English Members in seeing good Rules passed for the guidance of this House, on which we desire to model the new Chamber we hope to have in Ireland, and where we do not want to try experiments in Procedure. The passing of this Rule, in its present form, would be to place the Government in an invidious position, for the result of yielding to the temptation which will be inherent in the position will not only be discreditable to the House, but disastrous in its consequences. For these reasons,

I hope the Government will consent to adopt the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton).

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Sir, the fact that there will be opposition to these Rules, and the feeling of irritation that will exist owing to the necessity of interrupting the proceedings for the purpose of taking Supply, is one reason why we should set ourselves against any possible action of the Government in the application of the closure. These Rules mean in reality, notwithstanding that the right hon. Gentleman has said that they are to effect a return to ancient usage and custom, a total revolution in the Procedure of this House. The conduct of the Government is in direct opposition to their conduct when Rules of Procedure were formerly under discussion. The arguments in favour of the Amendment of my hon. Friend are not new, for in 1882 the present Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) proposed to defer the consideration of the 1st Rule until the others were considered. That was made in order to prevent the Government using the closure for the purpose of forcing the other Rules through the House. Well, Sir, we are now profiting by the example of the right hon. Gentleman, and I trust that in proposing so fair and reasonable a thing, we are putting forward what the Government will be able to accept; or at least, that we shall have from the right hon. Gentleman a little stronger assurance than we have yet received that there will be no undue enforcement of the Rule. Everyone knows that the Rules will not at all meet the great requirements of Parliament, and that we are only taking some short steps towards the goal. It is, therefore, well to have it established now as a principle that the discussion on Rules of Procedure when they come to be considered hereafter shall not be subject to any interference, but that there shall be free and ample debate. That is the reason why I especially press for the Amendment of my hon. Friend. I believe that the discussion on these Rules would not be unduly prolonged through the adoption of this proviso; we have certainly no such wish. Our desire is to have everything fully explained as we go along, and to see that the House makes no alteration which will press in any un-

fair way upon the Members of this House.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): Mr. Speaker, we must all acknowledge that in the conduct of debate in this House the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has had considerable experience, and that since he became the Leader of the House he has managed affairs with great tact. But we must remember that whatever his tact and discretion is he is not altogether independent; he is to a great extent at the mercy of his followers, amongst whom there are many ardent spirits. We believe that if this Rule is passed, and any discussion is somewhat prolonged pressure will be brought to bear upon him to put the clôture into operation which he will find it hard to stand against. We consider it to be our duty to offer a certain amount of opposition to these Rules, and particularly to the application of the 1st Rule to the discussion of the remaining Rules. We know that were you, Mr. Speaker, left to your own discretion you would be very slow to exercise arbitrary powers, but we maintain that if these Rules are passed the independence of the Chair will, to a great extent, be destroyed. We know, also, that influence will be brought to bear upon the Chair to induce him to sanction the application of the 1st Rule to the discussion of the subsequent Rules. Now, if it is necessary that there should be freedom of discussion at all, it is particularly necessary there should be perfect freedom to discuss resolutions such as these.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. P. J. POWER, resuming, said: If the Government assent to the gagging of Members, and to the passage of these Rules without full and free discussion of these Rules, they may find that they have acted unwisely. If, on the contrary, ample discussion is allowed, and the clôture is not applied to the subsequent Rules, hon. Members will not resent the application of the clôture to the extent they otherwise will. The Government themselves are, by the contents of *Hansard*, pinned to the sentiments we now express. The substance of this Motion was pressed with vigour by the present occupants of the Treasury

Bench on the Government in 1882. We believe that these Rules are unwise. We believe that the Amendment which the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) has proposed is one which ought to commend itself to all sections of the House. It has not been proved that since Her Majesty's present Government came into Office, any undue prolongation of debates, either in Committee or when you, Sir, have been in the Chair, has taken place. No doubt, when the Rules of Procedure were under discussion in 1882 there was very prolonged discussion, and then the Members of the Treasury Bench occupied the Front Opposition Bench, and were anxious that the Clôture Rule should be put off to the very last. We claim to be consistent on this point, as on all other points, and we certainly think that it would greatly expedite Business if the Government would grant our present request.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) said: I rise to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast, and in doing so, I do not think I am stultifying myself in the least. If the House were to pass the Amendment of my hon. Friend, I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) that the House either would stultify itself. Considering that no attempt has been made to restrict the scope of the debate up to the present; considering that you, Sir, have had no occasion whatever to exercise the authority that is already vested in your hands; and considering that the liberty of speech that Members of the House already enjoy has not been abused, I do not think the Government are wise in declining to accept this Amendment. When we entered upon the discussion of the Main Question a few days ago, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) stated that he expected a very long debate. I do not think that the scope or extent of the debate has exceeded, if, indeed, it has come up to, what the right hon. Gentleman expected. You, Sir, have ruled that if this first Rule is passed it will immediately become an Order of the House. That decision of yours, Mr. Speaker, is

emphatic, and the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Sexton) is designed with a view of relieving the Chair of the difficulty under which it labours by reason of that ruling. I have no doubt that your ruling is consistent with precedent; and therefore there is all the more reason for the proposal of my hon. Friend; and all the more reason for its acceptance by the Government, if they wish to give legal and constitutional effect to the practice observed during the course of this debate. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has stated at much length—and the most wearisome repetition—that the object of these Rules is to restore to the House the power over its own Business. I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly sincere in his statement. But with every respect to the right hon. Gentleman, I maintain we ought to be suspicious of him. We believe that the effect of this Rule will be to repose the power over the Business of the House in the hands of the Government, and we have reason to suspect, by our knowledge of human nature in general, and British Governments in particular—

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House be counted.

MR. SPEAKER: In the exercise of the discretion vested in me I shall decline to count the House. I have recently satisfied myself that there is a quorum of the House present.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Now, Sir, it requires a great stretch of credulity to trust the Government, or to trust any institution in this House in connection with the Government. It requires a great amount of confidence, a confidence which may be reposed in a Government by its natural supporters, but a confidence which cannot possibly be expected of the political opponents of the Government; and there are times when confidence of the character the First Lord of the Treasury expects from us becomes a crime, and when jealousy itself becomes a virtue. I believe that this is one of the cases in which confidence of the kind expected from us would be a crime, and in which jealousy becomes a virtue. We would fritter away our rights and privileges if we acceded to the request, blandly expressed by the First Lord of the Treasury, to trust the Government, to trust the Chair,

to trust the Chairman of Committee of Ways and Means; not to apply in a harsh manner the Rule that is about to be passed. Now, this Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Sexton) is most reasonable, because it seeks openly to give effect to what the Government is already professing. Its object is to prevent the application of the first Rule to the discussion of the subsequent Rules. We have the assurance, no doubt, from the First Lord of the Treasury, that the closure will not be applied harshly, but that greatly depends upon your action, Mr. Speaker. I have not the least doubt but that the great powers which this Rule will confer upon the Chair will be exercised with that moderation and good sense and good feeling that have already characterized your rulings; but still, Sir, when we remember that there are such important Rules to be passed as those affecting the hours of the Sittings of the House, and Motions for Adjournment at Question time—that cherished privilege of Members of the House which enables hon. Members to bring forward the different grievances under which their constituents labour—when such Rules have still to be considered, and when, if the first Rule is passed in its present form, the *clôture* may be applied to the remaining Rules before they have been adequately discussed, we have every right and reason to look with jealousy upon the power thus given to the Government. The limitation of debate will have a considerable effect upon the future of these Rules, just as the limitation of discussion upon the grievances of a country, or the limitation of the discussion of a Bill that may be brought forward by private Members, will have a considerable effect in the country, and will diminish the force of any law that may be passed by Parliament for the government of the people at large. If the *clôture* be applied to these Rules, there will not be that respect for the Rules and that obedience to the Rules that there would otherwise be. That is a good and sufficient reason why the Government should accede to the request contained in the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Sexton). It is an absolute waste of time to propose Amendment after Amendment, and to make speech after speech if the ears of the Government are closed. I support the Amendment,

and I regret that the cogent reasons and arguments urged on behalf of its adoption by its proposer and supporters have produced no effect upon the Government.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): Mr. Speaker, many things have happened since last we discussed the Rules affecting the Procedure in this House. It is quite true that in 1882 the Conservative Party opposed the *clôture*. At that time we had the greatest confidence in the impartiality and the dignity of the then Speaker, Sir Henry Brand, but we had some fear as to what his Successor might be. We believed Sir Henry Brand was superior in dignity and in impartiality to many of those who had preceded him in that Chair; and knowing that he contemplated retiring at no very distant date, we feared his Successor might not be equally impartial. Since his retirement we have had the great advantage of sitting under your presidency, and all hon. Members who have been some years in the House will bear me out when I say we have the utmost confidence in your decisions. It is not very often I am able to speak in praise of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), but I am very glad to avail myself of this opportunity to say how much I think the country owes to him in having nominated you to fill the Chair. Those who recollect the House of Commons at the time Sir Henry Brand retired, know that it was in the right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. W. E. Gladstone's) power to appoint the new Speaker as he could appoint a Junior Lord of the Treasury. We had the fear that a partizan Speaker might be appointed, but the right hon. Gentleman did not seek amongst his supporters for anyone who was likely to fulfil that position in a partizan spirit; but selected a gentleman who was generally looked upon as one admirably fitted for the position of Speaker of this House, and who, I am sure, has discharged the duties of his Office in a manner which even exceeds the very high expectation we had when he was placed in that Chair. The fact that we have added another Gentleman to the illustrious list of Speakers is a reason why we may with consistency extend somewhat the Rule we made some years ago. I shall have pleasure in voting with the Government on the present occasion.

[Fifth Night.]

Question put.

The House divided—Ayes 80; Noes 170: Majority 90.—(Div. List, No. 25.)

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move after the word "Question," in line 1, the insertion of the words—

"Other than the Question, on going into Committee of Supply, 'that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair.'"

The effect of my Amendment is that the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair be excluded from the operation of the *clôture*. The right to raise discussions on the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair, is one of the oldest privileges which Members of this House have ever claimed to exercise. There is an ancient Parliamentary maxim that discussions upon grievances shall precede the granting of Supplies. A debate upon the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair is an older form of considering Questions raised in Supply, than even the discussion upon the details in the Votes of Supply; and it is a far more effectual means of reducing the Estimates and of bringing public attention to the expenditure of the country, than a discussion raised upon individual Votes, and individual items in Committee of Supply. On going into Committee of Supply, questions are often raised upon principles that involve great expenditure. Having regard to the European situation and the part that England seems in danger of playing in European affairs, the House ought to be much more jealous of parting with the privilege I speak of than it might be at a less perilous time. Any day we may be asked by the present Government to consider a large War Vote, and if we part with the privilege of discussing questions of expenditure upon the Motion to go into Committee of Supply, we shall part with a very important weapon, and a very important engine of reform. Another reason for excluding from the operation of the *clôture* this privilege of the House, is the fact that besides the more irregular form of Motions for Adjournment, the going into Committee of Supply is really the only occasion upon which matters of urgent public importance can be discussed. If you take away this privilege, or if you limit it or restrict it in any way, Members will have to fall back upon Motions for Adjournment, and even the

latter privilege some of the Rules in this scheme of Procedure are threatening very seriously. If you have the right of moving Motions for Adjournment and the right of raising debates upon going into Committee of Supply restricted by these *Clôture* Rules, you will have one of the most dearly cherished privileges of free debate wrested from the hands of Parliament. The whole tendency of these Resolutions, and it is nowhere more manifest than in the operation it will have upon this particular privilege, is to increase the powers of the Executive Government at the expense of the liberties of Parliament. It is rather significant to see that it is a Tory Government that is urging these Resolutions forward. The functions of this House do not merely consist in making laws and in passing Votes in Supply. There is another function that this House possesses, and which it exercises at no time more conspicuously than upon the occasion to which this Amendment refers, and that is the function of free debate—of free speech. With the permission of the House, I will read what Lord Palmerston said in 1861 upon this very point. He said—

"This House has another function to discharge, and one highly conducive to the public interests—namely, that of being the mouth-piece of the nation; the organ by which all opinions, all complaints, all notions of grievances, all hopes and expectations, all wishes and suggestions which may arise among the people at large, may be brought to an expression here, may be discussed, examined, answered, rejected, or redressed. That I hold to be as important a function as either of the other two." (3 *Hansard*, [162] 1492)

Well, Sir, I think the prominence which this Parliament enjoys amongst the other Parliaments of the world is due to its debates rather than to its capacity for making laws, or to any other function which it exercises. It has been urged by several of the supporters of these Resolutions that every other Parliament in the world but this is possessed, in some form or another, of the *clôture*. This Parliament has been possessed of the *clôture* since 1882, but we may take it that this is the occasion upon which the *clôture* is to be formally and actively inaugurated as a working institution of this House. But, Sir, is there no other respect in which this Parliament differs from other Parliaments besides *clôture*? I say these debates wield an influence upon the affairs of this country which the

debates of no other Parliament exercise upon the affairs of their particular countries. Foreign papers do not think of reporting at any length the proceedings of Parliament.

MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the House is discussing the question of the application of closure on the occasion of debate on the Motion that Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair.

MR. T. P. GILL: I bow to your ruling with the greatest respect. All I want the House to do is to preserve this one occasion on which there can be free discussion of the grievances which may call for public discussion. Let us retain this as an axiom of Parliamentary Procedure that the discussion of grievances shall be the immediate preface of the granting of Supply. It strikes me as an extraordinary thing that the pride and the sentiment of this House is not more evoked than it is upon the occasion of the discussion of these Rules. You sit mute; one after another of the dearest privileges for which your ancestors struggled is being struck away. One side of the House vote away, without demur, Constitutional principles for the sake of a passing convenience. I will not detain the House any longer with my views on the subject, but simply express my hope that the Government may see their way to exclude from the operation of the *clôture* the ancient privilege of the House to raise discussions on the Motion to go into Committee.

Amendment proposed in line 1, after the word "Question," to insert the words "other than the Question, on going into Committee of Supply, 'That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair.'"—(*Mr. T. P. Gill.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I regret that it is not in my power to accede to this Amendment, and I do not apprehend that the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Louth (MR. T. P. GILL) has much expectation that I shall. The hon. Gentleman asks that in going into Committee of Supply special exception shall be made to the operation of the Rule. There are only three occasions in the course of the Session on which, with regard to operative

Supply, it is possible to move an Amendment on the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair—that is to say, on the first occasion of going into Supply on the Army, Navy, and Civil Service Estimates.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): And on Friday nights.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; and on Friday nights. The hon. Gentleman proposes that on these occasions the debate shall be continued just as long as it may be in the power of hon. Gentlemen who take part in it to speak. Now, if it is necessary that grievances should be stated in this House, I should be the last person in the world to say that they should not be stated before going into Supply; but the effect of this Amendment, if adopted, would be, in all probability, to prevent debate on all questions but one. That one question would hang round Supply until at last it became absolutely intolerable, and would prevent the discussion of questions which might be of the greatest importance. It is utterly impossible for the Government to accept the proposal. The hon. Gentleman desires to have unlimited discussion for one particular topic, and if that were conceded, as I say, it would prevent the discussion of other matters which hon. Members might, from time to time, desire to bring before the House. It is the duty of the Government, whatever their individual feelings may be, to endeavour to conduct the Business of this House so that the affairs of the country will be conducted with advantage to the country. It is only in the discharge of that duty that they undertake the very unpleasant task of recommending these Resolutions to the House; and it must be clear beyond doubt that they cannot accede to any restriction being put upon the power of exercising the *clôture* in a case where a subject has been adequately discussed, and the Chair itself feels that the debate should terminate. What the hon. Member proposes to do is to place a restriction on the power of the *clôture* that already exists. The Speaker now has the power to represent to the House that there has been adequate discussion on a question before the House, and that power can be exercised with regard to any Motion that may be under debate, or any stage of any Bill. I think the experience of the House is distinctly in favour of the extension,

[*Fifth Night.*]

rather than the restriction, of that power.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): As the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) says, if this Motion be carried it will enlarge the powers of the House; and I really must protest against the assumption put forward by the Treasury Bench that when we have placed ourselves in the hands of the Government of the day—for that is what I consider the passing of such Procedure Rules as these amounts to—we shall always be treated with the utmost fairness and consideration, and that the power we have given to the majority will never be used to our disadvantage. Sir, that is a fundamental proposition to which we take the most complete exception. Why, only last night, when we were discussing whether or not there should be freedom of discussion in Committee of Supply; and when we had only been considering the matter for about an hour, the noble Lord opposite the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) rose and said that, in his opinion, it was pretty evident that the subject—perhaps the largest subject we shall have to discuss in connection with these Rules—had been discussed enough. But, there is another assumption which is even more objectionable to me—namely, that while we are always to assume that these Clôture Rules will be put into force with the greatest consideration for Parliament and all its Members—if on any subject whatever the House retains freedom of debate, it is certain as a House to abuse the liberty which it possesses. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. W. H. Smith) with, to my mind, astounding confidence of assumption, represented that if—even on the only three nights of the Session when we are allowed to discuss grievances on going into Committee, we retain freedom of debate—it will be used to bring about useless and unnecessary discussion and endless obstruction. I object in the strongest manner to this repeated assumption that the Government are deserving of all trust and confidence, and that this House is deserving of none at all. I think the doctrine is most monstrous, and I think the time is coming when it will be understood and appreciated. I would ask that we may, at

least during the continuance of these debates, be spared the assumption that the House itself is undeserving of all trust and confidence, that its Members, as a body, require to have their mouths closed; but that when we have given the majority of the day power to close our mouths, we may then depend on all consideration and courtesy. I am prepared to say that if there be any hon. Member of this House who is entitled to claim from it confidence that in so far as he is concerned, he would exercise any power that he might possess as the Leader of the House with discretion and courtesy; I think the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) is entitled to claim it. I think he deservedly stands very high in the confidence of the House generally on all sides; but I am bound to say that if the right hon. Gentleman were tenfold as trustworthy as he is, I should utterly distrust his action when he became master of this House. I object to any set of men becoming the masters of the House. I know I speak under great disadvantage, because I speak at a time when there is a very justifiable anxiety in the House and in the country that Public Business should be proceeded with with greater despatch than it has been. I am perfectly sensible of the necessity, and I wish we could see a way by which we could pass Rules of Procedure that would really tend to facilitate Public Business without sweeping away the liberties of the House. I cannot help feeling that these Rules of Procedure—both those which now exist and those that are now being passed—have been introduced into the House at the sacrifice of many of its rights and privileges, in order to meet a deplorable but a passing state of circumstances. Having known the House long before Obstruction was initiated by the Conservative Party, I do not forget that in years gone by hon. Members of this House used to come down night after night to hear one set of hon. Gentlemen on that side, and another set of hon. Gentlemen on this side, talk needlessly and endlessly. We had a worse state of things then than has ever existed since. It is hopeless to expect the Government to accept the Amendment; and I can only say that the policy of denying all freedom to the House generally is a policy so fraught with

Mr. W. H. Smith

evil and disaster to Parliament in the future that I enter my protest against it. I am not one of those who look with any particular adoration at Ministers. I believe myself that they are very often wanting in many ways, and I am very pleased indeed to take my stand with any set of hon. Members who make any kind of fight on behalf of the general freedom of the House in this time of trial.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has, I think, been answered very fully on the general question by the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed); but I should like to say a word about the most technical portion of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks. I understood him to argue that on the three nights when private Members are able to bring subjects before the House, the *clôture* may be desirable on the first Motion in order to give an opportunity for Motions numbers two, three, and four. I think, however, that by *clôturing* the first Motion you will prevent subsequent Motions from coming on at all unless you amend the Rule. The question on a Friday night, for instance, will be "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair;" there may be three Notices of Motion—one by the hon. Member for Cardiff, drawing attention to the state of our iron-clads; another by some Irish Member—perhaps myself—in reference to the Arterial Drainage Commission, which has not yet reported; and a third by some cavalry general dealing with some reduction in the Cavalry Forces of Her Majesty. The *clôture* will operate in this way—having stopped the Motion in reference to iron-clads I shall be prevented from dealing with arterial drainage; and the cavalry general will be unable to call attention to the fact, perhaps, that the Artillery has been reduced by a half or a tenth. I do not know, Sir, that you will rule that the application of the *clôture* to the first Motion stops the second and third Motions; still, you may do so. I should like to have that point decided. You will hardly give a ruling on a hypothesis, I know; therefore, I would urge the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to insert in the Resolution to show that after a first Motion has been disposed of under the circumstances

I have described, the second, and third, and fourth may be taken; each one requiring—if it is thought necessary to stop it—a separate application of the *clôture*. I say, Sir, that, as the Rule stands, it may be technically impossible for you to permit that; for, according to the Standing Orders, it is impossible for you to put the Question, so as to take a Division on it, that you do leave the Chair on any but the first Question. If the First Lord of the Treasury cannot speak again on the subject, I would ask that some other Member of the Government reply to the technical point I have raised. On the general question, I desire to say I look with the greatest horror upon the prospect of these opportunities of expressing grievances being taken away from private Members. For a great many years there have been many small grievances existing in Ireland. I do not refer to the question of Home Rule, or to the Land Question, because those are big questions which force themselves to the front. But owing to our being ruled in London and not in Dublin, we have a great many grievances that are never redressed, and that we have no opportunity of bringing before the House except in Committee of Supply, or on those nights when the Question is formally put that you, Sir, do leave the Chair. Our attempts to obtain redress in Committee of Supply may be *clôtured*; but we still hope that if we are successful in the ballot we may be permitted to bring forward Questions on the Motion that you do leave the Chair. We desire to ventilate our grievances in this House, because although we are only briefly reported in the London and the English provincial Press, still a little of what we say does get into the Press of this country, and the people of this country have some means of seeing that we have grievances unredressed. When this *Clôture* Rule is put in force, it will be found that the British Constitution is working in a different manner to the manner in which it has been working for the past two or three centuries. I do not say whether the new mode will or will not be better than the old; I do not set up to be a prophet, but the whole thing will be changed. You are closing the mouths of hon. Members in many different ways. You are providing yourselves with arms by which you can close our mouths.

[Fifth Night.]

You say—"Trust us—we will not use these arms against you." You say—"You always have this great protection in the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and his Party, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and his Party. They will come to your rescue, and the Conservatives will be beaten." But I would rather not trust to that. I believe it is a vanishing Party. In a short time it will either become Conservative—and we should not very much object if it did—or will join us, or divide between the Conservatives and Radicals. There is no guarantee that that Party would prevent the exercise of the *clôture*. A despotism works well so long as you have an intelligent Administration, and so may these Rules; but directly a despotism is worked badly, it becomes very bad and very wicked. I say it is necessary for us to have good Rules—

MR. SPEAKER: I must call the attention of the hon. and gallant Gentleman to the fact that he is not speaking to the Amendment before the House.

COLONEL NOLAN: I spoke very technically at first; but I am afraid I was betrayed into departing from the technical part of the question by the remarks of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I stuck very strictly to the Amendment until I was so betrayed. I think the proper course to pursue will be to put into the Resolution words to the effect that second, third, and fourth Motions may be taken on private Members' nights unless they are specially *clôtured*.

MR. MAHONY (Meath, N.): So far as I can see, there is nothing in these Resolutions to repeal the existing Rules, and, if the Amendment were rejected, the Chair would have the closing power it already possesses. There is nothing in the Rule to guide the Chair as to how it is to proceed in giving its consent. The Rule says—"If the consent has been previously obtained." It does not say—

MR. SPEAKER: This Amendment is to exempt from Closure Motions on going into Committee of Supply on the question that I now leave the Chair. We are not now discussing the general question of the closure.

MR. MAHONY: I bow to your ruling, Sir, but I was merely answering the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of

the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), who gave that as the reason why this Amendment was unnecessary. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury also told us that the object of all the Rules is to ensure the progress of the Business of the country; but the power private Members have of raising special local grievances on going into Committee of Supply is a power that we should be unwilling to part with. Topics may be referred to here that may be of great importance to a particular locality, though some hon. Members may think their discussion antagonistic to the general Business of the country, and calculated to delay it. It appears to me, Sir, that it would be very reasonable to reserve to hon. Members one opportunity, at any rate, on which they might still have full opportunity to discuss special grievances that affect localities and do not affect the country in general. We are told that in regard to all these Rules of Procedure we may trust to the fairness of the House. Sir, the fairness of the House means the fairness of the majority of the hon. Gentlemen who support the Government. Well, I was very much struck by what occurred last night. Whilst we were discussing an Amendment that would have had a very far-reaching effect as regards Ireland, we were met by constant interruptions from hon. Gentlemen opposite—by cries of "Divide, divide, divide!" If it is in that spirit we are to be met, it certainly would induce me to offer all the opposition in my power to these Rules. There is, however, in the passage of these Rules, a certain amount of satisfaction. There is satisfaction in the prospect that at no very distant date we shall have the opportunity of seeing hon. Members on the Government side of the House withering under the lash themselves.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Year by year it becomes more important than ever to preserve those few opportunities that now are left to private Members for bringing forward grievances. Some years ago, a Standing Order was passed by which the opportunities of discussing grievances before going into Committee of Supply were considerably curtailed. By the 21st Standing Order of the House of the year 1882, it was laid down that whenever Supply was put down as the first Order of the Day on Monday or Thursday, the

Speaker should leave the Chair without any question put or debate allowed, except on the first occasion, on which either the Army or the Navy or the Civil Service Estimates were proceeded with. Well, since that date the terms of the Resolution were ruled by the late Speaker to include even Supplementary Estimates. The consequence is, that there is only one day in the whole year on which a discussion of a general character can be raised. No doubt in this particular year there are a large number of hon. Members who, properly enough, are anxious to address the House with regard to matters concerning the Army Estimates. We should have ample opportunity for several days of discussing thoroughly the condition of the Administrative Department of the Army, especially with regard to guns and arms generally—not only their manufacture and quality, but the administrative system under which the Army is supplied with them. It will be in the recollection of everyone that some months ago the country was startled by a letter written by an eminent naval authority in reference to the construction of the Navy. That alone would supply material for a careful and close debate, to the exclusion of all other subjects whatever. But with regard to the Civil Service Estimates, the question is still more urgent and important. There is Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission; the grievances of British subjects in the Pacific; and a whole host of subjects which it is plain the opportunities of discussing under the New Rule will be attenuated almost down to vanishing point. It is proposed to enable the Government to close the debate as soon as they have been able to wake their followers up to a sufficient degree of warmth to keep up constant interruptions and cries of "Divide, divide, divide!" The question of Army administration—which has been referred to I do not know how many Commissions and Committees—is one, and cannot be properly and adequately discussed at a single Sitting of the House; but now it is proposed that even that Sitting shall be curtailed whenever the Government are able to manufacture the appearance of a strong sense on the part of a large section of the House that the debate ought to close. I think that if any Amendment is justified by the circumstances of the case it is that

under the consideration of the House; and I fail to see that the answer of the First Lord of the Treasury in any way explained any point which I have made. I do not know whether the Government intend to pursue the same policy that was witnessed in an earlier debate when, in spite of repeated representations—in spite of the fact that numerous substantial points were adduced to contest their general position—no answer was made by any one of the considerable number of Ministers sitting on the Government Bench. I hope we shall have some answer to these points—which I submit are substantial ones—that I have ventured to lay before the House.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 78; Noes 210: Majority 132.—(Div. List, No. 26.)

MR. SPEAKER: Next on the Notice Paper stand two Amendments of a similar character—the one in the name of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), and the other in the name of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan). The first of these Amendments is to insert in Rule 1, line 1, after "proposed" the words "and debated in the House for six hours, or in Committee of the whole House for one hour;" and the second is to insert after "proposed" the words "and has been debated for two hours in the whole House or for one hour in Committee." I would suggest to the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway that he should move his Amendment as an Amendment to that of the hon. Member for the City of Cork by moving to leave out "six" and to substitute "two."

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): After the discussion on my hon. Friend's Amendment I will either adopt your suggestion, Sir, or withdraw my proposal altogether.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The Government have repeatedly, during the discussion of these Rules of Procedure, asserted that it is not their intention unduly to limit debate or trespass upon the rights of minorities. Now, Sir, if I had had the gift of prevision, and had been able to foresee, or rather to hear, in advance before they had been uttered, the arguments of Her Majesty's Government I could not have better fallen in with those arguments, and met them in a more fair and candid spirit—not in

opposition, but in agreement—than I have done by putting down this Amendment. Either we are to be allowed to debate questions fully and freely under this proposed New Rule, or we are not. If we are to be allowed to debate them, surely it is reasonable that there should be some limit of time accorded for it. The House will recollect that I am not now dealing with the limit of an individual speech. I am dealing with the question of the limit of a whole debate composed of several speeches, when I ask that there may be time given within which it may be permitted to debate the question, and Ministers will not be allowed to intervene with the *clôture*. Now, Sir, I like my Amendment better than that of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan); and your suggestion that the latter should be taken as an Amendment to my proposal I should like to consider for a little while and judge of in accordance with the nature of the debate, and the reply that we may receive from the Government. Though I prefer my Amendment, if it were a question of half-a-loaf being better than no bread, I should be willing to accept the half-loaf in the shape of the Amendment moved by my hon. and gallant Friend. I have placed my Amendment on the Paper without consulting my hon. and gallant Friend, and he placed his on the Paper without previous consultation with me, and without knowledge of the Amendment I intended to move. The fact that he has chosen a margin of two hours, and I have chosen a margin of six hours, is a clear indication of the different characters of our minds. As the Rule now stands, it cannot be too much impressed upon the House that it will be in the power of the Government to move the stoppage of the debate before there has been any debate at all. It will not even be necessary for them to initiate a debate or carry on a debate on their own part. We had a little discussion last night about the necessity of securing that there shall be power to speak on an Amendment; but under this Rule not only will there be no power to speak on an Amendment, but there will be no power of proposing one or of voting on one; and more than that, if Ministers choose to prevent it, there will be no power of speaking on the Main Question at all. A more abso-

lute Rule than the one under consideration has never been placed on the Standing Orders of any Legislative Assembly. You may search the Records of other Parliaments, and you will find that nowhere does there exist a Rule of *Clôture* of so abrupt, unrestricted and wholesale a character as the one we are now proceeding with. How does it read since it has been Amended? why, that the *clôture* may be applied after the Question has been applied; it need not be after a debate. It may be that a Minister of the day will come down and propose a Vote, and then, confident of his majority, without argument, may consider himself entitled to ask the Chair to allow him to propose "That the Question be now put;" the Question may be put, and then the Vote may be passed without opportunity having been given to move an Amendment. Sir, we cannot rely upon general declarations—we cannot rely upon the general declaration we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that it is not his intention to adopt the course I have pointed out. We have had some experience of the brevity of Office of the right hon. Gentleman. We have had, for example, his celebrated 24 hours' tenure. Though we were glad the right hon. Gentleman was enabled during those 24 hours to make the practical acquaintance of the green shores of our own country; still, while not exactly thinking that it may be an example of the brevity of his present tenure of Office, at all events it is a reminder to us of the change of character and mutability of all human affairs. Though we value very highly the right hon. Gentleman's statement that it is not his intention to act harshly, or to unduly shorten the scope of the debate, yet we have to anticipate the time when even a more formidable Bismarck than the right hon. Gentleman may come upon the scene; and when we may have to encounter a foeman who may do that which the right hon. Gentleman says he never means to do. I remember what happened on one occasion. A number of Irish Members were suspended for unduly prolonging the debate and wilfully disregarding the Chair, who had not been in the House at all during the progress of the debate. I think nothing could show more clearly than that the necessity of avoiding hasty action, and of inserting in this Resolu-

tion such words as will secure that the expressions of opinion which we hear from the Front Bench will be practically carried out by the Successors of right hon. Gentlemen opposite.

"Will you walk into my parlour?
Said the spider to the fly."

But, Sir, we hope there will be some mode of escape for us from the parlour of the Government. Is the Amendment which I ask the House to adopt an unreasonable one as regards its extent? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman may think that these hours would be too long a time for some purposes, and too short a time for others. I will not pin myself down to any specific limit of time. I do not ask hon. Members to vote for these six hours then; I will ask them to vote for the principle that there should be some limit, say of four, three, or two hours, before this summary Rule can possibly be enforced. We have had debates on Irish coercion, and we have been beaten on that Question; and that, I think, is perhaps the strongest claim we have made yet for the adoption of a limit. The right hon. Gentleman will probably admit that the minority should have the right of expressing their views on the policy of the Government; two hours is not an excessive period, and I submit that the right hon. Gentleman should consider the proposal. These points, I believe, were raised four years ago by the right hon. Gentleman in the interest of his own Party when these Rules were first discussed; yet still the right hon. Gentleman may fairly say that as a Minister, that his mind—his Ministerial mind—has only just been attracted to the consideration of this question; and I should be glad to withdraw my Amendment if I had the assurance that he would favourably consider the proposal that a limit of the time should be given as an absolute right to the minority if they choose to exert it, for the discussion of a question before the clôture can be applied, either with or without the consent of the Chair.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "and debated in the House for six hours, or in Committee of the Whole House for one hour."—(Mr. Parnell.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH): I am exceedingly sorry so often to advise the House that I am unable to accept Amendments. I fully appreciate the tenour of, and the kindly feeling expressed in the speech, in which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has proposed his Amendment to the House; but I am almost tempted to imagine that he can hardly be in sober earnest in making this proposal. Its meaning is that upon every Motion and every Order of Debate six hours of discussion is to be permitted; and that upon every Motion and every Order the closure would be considered a fitting and proper thing after six hours' debate. I wish to point out that any limitation of this kind might be too long a period of debate or too short a period. The truth is that it is impossible to regulate the period during which a debate should last, which must always be checked by the control and judicial opinion of the Speaker or Chairman; it is impossible to lay down beforehand the limits within which a debate would not be excessive, or to say to what extent it should be prolonged. It is impossible to judge the amount of debate which may be necessary, or to say what question may remain behind with regard to which the time of the House should be occupied. Reference must be had to the proportional importance of the question under consideration, and to the questions which will succeed it. Now, the time of the House is only a limited quantity, and one most important consideration for the House will be whether there will remain sufficient of the time of the House after the debate has taken place. For these reasons I am unable to accede to this proposal of the hon. Gentleman. I trust the hon. Gentleman will feel that the House, having by a considerable majority affirmed the principle of closure, ought now to proceed to the grave and important questions which remain for its decision. Further, I think the hon. Gentleman will have attained his object by making a protest in this House, and calling public attention to the course we have thought it our duty to pursue. We wish to represent to him that very little can be gained by insisting on principles which a little consideration must satisfy him cannot be agreed to by the present Government

[Fifth Night.]

or those who think it necessary to bring these Rules under the consideration of the House.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) says, no doubt sincerely, that he is desirous to meet us in an amicable spirit, but that hard fate prevents him from carrying out his wish. The right hon. Gentleman says that if this Amendment were carried every question might occupy the House for six hours, or the Committee of the Whole House one hour. If so, there is greater force in the complaint of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) that on any question which comes before the House we may not be allowed one hour or one minute for discussion. Does the right hon. Gentleman forget that the Old Rule is still in existence whereby the Speaker will still be able to declare to the House that the question has been adequately discussed, and that it ought to be put? The New Rule absolutely excludes all question of time. You are not at liberty, Mr. Speaker, under the Old Rule to suggest the closure of debate unless you are satisfied of two things: first, that the question has been adequately debated; and, secondly, that the House has manifested its sense "that the Question be now put;" now you will be asked to satisfy yourself that a question has been adequately discussed before it has been discussed at all. The moment you have put the Question that a Bill be read a second time, for instance, a Minister may follow up that Motion by another "That the Question be now put." In those circumstances I maintain that there is a total absence of security for any minority in this House, and if that is so when you are in the House, Mr. Speaker, how much more will it be so when you have left the Chair and it is occupied by others; and when a Minister of the Crown suggests to his own nominee that the Question should be put—a proceeding which will very much resemble the head of a commercial firm asking one of his junior clerks if he may take a holiday? The Select Committee of last year—one of the strongest that was ever appointed—adopted, after long consideration, what practically amounted to a Time Rule. They recommended not a closure which should be applied at any time, but a closure which should be applied five times a week and on no other

days—namely, at 12 o'clock on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and at half-past 5 o'clock on Wednesday. Now, as the House meets at 4 o'clock on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and as Public Questions usually come on for consideration at half-past 4; the Select Committee of last year recommended a Rule which would give half an hour longer for debate than that which is proposed by my hon. Friend. Well, Sir, there are four Parties in the House—the Party led by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), the Irish Party, the Government Party, and that non-descript Party which sits on one side of the House and votes on the other. None of these Parties will know how to act if the closure can be applied at any time; they would not—unless they know how long a debate is likely to last—be able to put forward their strongest men, and the debate could not therefore be effectively conducted. My hon. Friend has asked for the concession of a point essential for due and intelligent discussion; and if the Government reject the proposal they will turn debate in this House into hopeless chaos and have cause to regret so doing hereafter.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): There is not a single Amendment proposed by hon. Members on these Benches which has not in an exaggerated form been supported by hon. Gentlemen now occupying the Treasury Bench. I am now quoting from *Hansard*, and I see that in 1882 the noble Lord the present First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) moved an Amendment to the effect that when it appeared to Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means in Committee of the Whole House at any time that the subject had been adequately discussed, and that the discussion had been prolonged for the purpose of obstruction, he might so inform the House or Committee. The Amendment was supported by the noble Viscount, now the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross), the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Maidstone (Captain Aylmer), the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), the hon. Gentleman the present Under Secretary

of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart Wortley), the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton), and by the then Leader of the Tory Party (Sir Stafford Northcote). Now, the Amendment which was then proposed is that which the right hon. Gentleman opposite has rejected to-day—it is the identical Amendment which the whole of the Tory Party supported in 1882. Further, I point out that the arguments now used by my hon. Friends are the same as those used by the Tory Party on the occasion. I think we may leave the public to judge of the conscientiousness of the Tory Party.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I take great interest in this question, because I feel that I am exercising for the last time the right of free speech in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) wishes to give to the people of these Kingdoms a new reading of the expression—"Silence is golden." This change of front on the part of the occupants of the Treasury Bench is most remarkable. It will remain for the historian of this century to describe the Party opposite as men who got into power by preaching certain principles and retained it by abandoning them. Throughout the course of this debate we have heard the tyrant's plea—"Give me power and I will not use it." Again, and again has the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House used that argument; but let me say, while I am permitted to speak, that I prefer the shield and protection of the ancient liberties of this House to the contingent good nature of the right hon. Gentleman, who is assuming, with indifferent success, the character of firmness and resolution. I ask for some assurance that the freedom of debate shall not be greatly curtailed. The right hon. Gentleman has changed his mind on this subject, and he may change it again. I hope he will change his mind even a third time, and consider that it may be better for a Government to protect the privileges of a minority than to break up the Constitution and pelt them with its fragments.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory): I think it is rather hard that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H.

Smith) should place a construction on the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) which that Amendment does not bear. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to speak as if it were implied that if the debate had lasted for six hours in the House, or for one hour in the Committee of the Whole House, that the closure should be applied. My hon. Friend intends nothing resembling that. He simply argued that it was only reasonable to ask that this power, which is absolutely new in the form in which it is now presented to the House, shall not be exercised until there has been reasonable discussion. I would ask the House to consider whether that is not a perfectly reasonable suggestion, and whether Her Majesty's Government, on their own principles, ought not to accept it. I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the closure will not be used arbitrarily, unjustly, or unfairly, or without full, ample, and reasonable discussion. Why, then, do they object to the particular Amendment before the House? The right hon. Gentleman will find that it requires more than his logic to answer that question. The hon. Member for Cork has said that he would actually withdraw his Amendment if the Government would consider the proposal; and that he will be disposed to accept not six, but four, or two hours, if they would meet him half way. Is the Government prepared to say that they will not do this? If so, they will show their unfairness towards us, and increase their own difficulties hereafter. If you refuse this Amendment, and if it goes forth to the public, as it will, that you have not been willing to allow, without closure, six hours' discussion in the House, or one hour in Committee; the effect will be to produce in the minds of the people a conviction, which every action of the Government will only confirm, that you are animated by an animus—a bitter and unreasoning animus—against my hon. Friends and myself. If a proposal of this sort had been made by an English Member guarding the interests of England, it would have been considered in a very different spirit to that which was manifested by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) to-night. It is because this Amendment is moved by the Leader of the Irish Party and of the Irish people, that it is treated with con-

tumely and condemned by the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends. We have, by this Amendment, strengthened our position in the country. We have proved that we do not want any powers of Obstruction, but simply a reasonable opportunity of debate. Such opportunity is denied by the Gentlemen who now hold Office. It is quite evident they are anxious to obtain this Rule, that they may gag the Irish Representatives and pass an Act which will destroy the liberties of the people of Ireland.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Mr. Speaker, we have been informed in solemn tones by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) that, notwithstanding the existence of this Rule, full and free discussion will be obtained on all occasions. The present Amendment brought forward so moderately and clearly by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) puts the sincerity of the Government to the test. If they will not accept it, we may take it that very little reliance is to be placed on the promises of the Front Bench. The arguments with which they meet the contentions from this side of the House are arguments showing the docility and submission of the majority. Hon. Members opposite have been reminded of speeches they made in 1882, speeches directly opposite to the present Amendment, the very terms of which are identical with it, but notwithstanding that, they meet us by trooping in when the Division bell rings and outvoting us. The soft words of the First Lord of the Treasury are very little consolation to the minority in this House if the arguments of the minority are met with a decided *non possumus*, and met without any reference whatever to the relevancy or reasonableness of arguments. The Government are going a little too far in this matter. We can all understand the discipline of Party; but the discipline exhibited on the other side has become degraded to that of the merest subservience. No matter what the professions of hon. Gentlemen may have been years ago, no matter how eloquently they may have inveighed against the tyrannical Rules brought forward by the then Government, not one of them has the manliness to stand up now and make a protest on behalf of liberty of speech. I have no doubt we shall be outvoted on this Amendment as we have been on

others; but though that may be the case the lessons to be drawn from these Divisions will live long after the present day. Right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who are now content to lounge idly on the Benches opposite, and make no reply to these reasonable and moderate propositions will come, in the days of their darkness and adversity, to regret that they do not associate themselves with a course of Procedure, which, in the future, will be their only safeguard, and their only protection.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): My hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) has shown that the Chair has large powers under the existing Rules, and that these New Rules are not necessary for what the Government profess to want. Another hon. Friend of mine has said we are asked to trust in the good nature of the Leader of the House. That may be very well, especially when it is described as contingent good nature. I will not quarrel with the description, but it does not appear to be contagious good nature. Another hon. Member said that the Government had given a new interpretation of the proverb, "Silence is golden." They have given a still newer one, and one which they will carry into effect, as will be seen. Silence will be golden with them when, on nights of Supply, they will, without voice being raised, absorb the golden millions paid by the taxpayers of the country. I do not think we have asked anything unreasonable. We have asked that there should be a limit to the brevity of the time within which a Minister can move the closure of a debate. It would be becoming in hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and conducive to the closure of this portion of the debate, at least, if they would endeavour to answer the arguments which have been addressed to the House by the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton). There is no use in saying that the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has answered those arguments. The right hon. Gentleman has answered nothing. I protest on behalf of those who seek to preserve to this House some remnant of its inherent right, and some vestige of the liberty that belongs to it, against reposing all our trust and confidence in the Minister of the day or even in the Speaker, or Chairman of Com-

mittees. Without desiring to be at all discourteous to the Chair, I must point out that under these Rules there would be a great temptation to a Government who are anxious perhaps to enter into war, or to carry drastic reforms, to elect a Party Speaker, so as to work him as a mere puppet for the purposes of carrying out their objects.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I rise to protest against the manner in which all the proposals emanating from these Benches have been received by the Government. We have been met all along by a steady system of refusal. This is one of the Amendments which the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) may very fairly accept, and thereby show that he is not disposed to offer a steadfast refusal to every proposal coming from these Benches; and the more especially when I remember that the proposals we made in 1882, which were similar to those we now make, were supported by hon. Gentlemen opposite. I recollect that Mr. Disraeli once described the Front Bench as a row of extinct volcanoes. We might compare the present Front Bench to a row of extinct Obstructionists; because, on this very question in 1882 many of the right hon. Gentlemen who now sit on the Government Benches exhausted all the resources of the House in opposing the proposals of the then Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House said that six hours might be too long, and too short a time to allow. That is the very reason why we ask that this Amendment should be accepted. At present there is no outside limit, and we only ask for the limitation of six hours when Mr. Speaker is in the Chair, and one hour when the Chairman of Ways and Means is presiding, as an irreducible minimum within which the freedom of discussion should not be interfered with, but beyond which the Speaker and Chairman should exercise the discretion with which they are vested. If the Leader of the House does not see his way to accept the present Amendment we shall be obliged to go to a Division.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.), who rose amid cries of "Divide!" said: I should like a second Division to be avoided; but, of course, if hon. Members intend to put the clôtüre in force against me, I must avail myself of the

advantage of having a Division. What I wish to do is to put it to the Government whether they will accept my Amendment as a compromise? The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) proposes that there should be six hours' debate certain for every question before the House, and one hour's debate certain for every question before the Committee. It so happens that my view as to the debate which should be allowed in Committee coincides with that of my hon. Friend; but for a debate in the House my Amendment proposes that there should be at least two hours allowed. If the Government will agree to my Amendment, I have no doubt the hon. Member for Cork will agree to its substitution for his Amendment. I really do not think that anything ought to be allowed to be proposed in this House which is not worthy of two hours' debate. If the Government will not agree to the substitution of my Amendment for that now before the House, I suppose a Division had better be taken on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 82; Noes 268: Majority 186.—(Div. List, No. 27.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I now propose to ask the Government and the House, since they have refused to agree to a margin of time, at least to agree to a safeguard that there shall be some number of Members heard in reply to any proposition which may be made—I assume by the Government—before the Question is put. Under the Rule as it now stands a Question may be put without debate; it may also be put after debate by those who propose the Question, and without hearing the voice of those who oppose it. I do not know how far Her Majesty's Government have got in determining the safeguards to be hereafter inserted; but we may assume that they are considering the advisability of the insertion of some safeguards. We are coming to the part of the Rule, the turning point, if I may so express it, in the Amendment of the Rule, when it will be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to declare what modifications they intend to allow the House to adopt in reference to this matter. I would not persevere in moving Amendments of this kind, if I supposed that the Government

meant, of their own accord, to propose some satisfactory modification of the Rule. I cannot help thinking it is a mark of the extreme haste with which the Government have drafted this Rule, and of the firm support they had relied upon getting from the Liberal Unionists in its consideration, that such a very important point as this should have been overlooked—that they should have been obliged to admit, as they have done, that some provisions should be made for the expression of the views of the minority before the closure is applied. I am not asking that any limitation should be put on the Closure Resolution passed in 1882. Nothing of the kind. That Closure Resolution will remain in full force. This Closure Resolution will be one in addition. It is not proposed to repeal the old Closure Resolution; and no modification may be inserted in the present Closure Resolution to modify or counteract the old one. Therefore, let not the House suppose, for a moment, I am doing any unnecessary thing in asking for some modification. The present Rule comes before us marked by hasty and ill preparation—marked by a most remarkable change of front on the part of Her Majesty's Government. It is not even sanctioned by the Report of the Select Committee which sat on this question last year. It is not sanctioned by any recommendations made by the minority in that Select Committee, which was composed of the Representatives of the present Government. The Representatives of the present Government on that Committee took a line entirely different to that the Government are now taking. They took the line I am taking; they asked for safeguards. What was the result? Not a Resolution requiring additional safeguards, checks, balances, and controls at every line, as this one does; not a drastic, stringent, and unheard-of measure of closure, but a closure which could only be put into force at midnight on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and at half-past 5 o'clock on Wednesdays. That was the outcome of the Select Committee of 1886, an outcome which was strongly opposed and resisted, as being too stringent and too hard and dangerous upon minorities; and, yet, we now find that in the short interval which has elapsed since then, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) and his Party have

turned their backs upon everything they said and did, not only in 1882, but so recently as 1886; and have come before the House of Commons and the country with a Rule of this kind, requiring, as I say, limitations, checks, safeguards and balances at almost every line. I trust the House will consider this matter fully, fairly, and candidly. The Resolution is a very stringent one; it is unprecedented. It is one which provides for the absolute closure of all debate, whether in the House or in Committee of the Whole House. The further we go, it is like a chain dragging increased weight behind it as it is payed out. The further we go, the more Amendments that are rejected, the more words that are passed under the law of Parliament, the more dangerous the Rule becomes, and the more necessary it becomes that the Government should be acted upon in some way, and induced to consider the question of the rights of minorities. I submit we have now arrived at a period of the debate and of the Resolution when it would be fair to ask the Government for some more definite expression of opinion with regard to this matter than they have given us up to now. The right hon. Gentleman announced, at an early period of the proceedings to-day, that he would carefully consider this subject, and I shall be glad to know how far that process of consideration has gone. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that all that I am fighting for is that there shall be some safeguard inserted in the Resolution; that there shall be the right of adequate and sufficient discussion to minorities. The House has just rejected, by a large majority, the claim that I made that there should be a margin of time. The claim that I now make is one of a different character. My Amendment simply asks that some Members, four in number, shall be allowed to express their opinion on the part of the minority. Is that out of the way? Will the right hon. Gentleman say that any question can ever arise on which four Members ought not to be allowed to talk? He objected to my last proposal, on the ground that some questions might arise on which six hours' discussion would be too much. I was willing to concede that point to him; but I cannot concede that, with the power you have already got under the

Clôture Resolution of 1882, with the powers which the Speaker possesses of silencing a Member who talks irrelevantly, by calling on him to resume his seat—that any question can arise on which it could be said that it would be excessive debate if four Members exercised the right of speaking. I shall be surprised if the Conservative Party refuses to agree to this Amendment, or to some limitation of the power of clôture.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word “proposed,” “and has been replied to by at least four Members.”—(Mr. Parnell.)

Question proposed, “That those words be there inserted.”

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I think the hon. Gentleman must anticipate the answer that I am obliged to give him. This is really an Amendment which we have already considered in another form. [“No, no!”] Yes, precisely the same. The hon. Gentleman has many Friends on his side of the House who would find no difficulty whatever in occupying six hours in making four speeches. The proposal of the hon. Member is both too much and too little; for it implies that four Members shall speak, and it implies also—or may be held to imply—that no more than four Members shall speak. Under those circumstances, Sir, it is impossible for me to accept the Amendment.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): The right hon. Gentleman's argument against all the Amendments proposed seems to be that the House should entrust Ministers with large powers, and feel assured that they will never take advantage of them. I could trust the right hon. Gentleman himself, personally; but I have a high authority for refusing to trust in the action of any Ministry. When this Amendment was moved in 1882, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) put the question to the Tory Party then in Opposition, whether they thought the Liberal Government would use the powers placed in their hands unfairly; and he went on to justify his refusal of the Amendment by declaring that the Liberal Government would not use the powers unfairly.

The authority I would quote is no less a person than the late Sir Stafford Northcote. Alluding to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, he said—

“The right hon. Gentleman asked whether they really could be of opinion that the Liberal Party would never interfere so as to stifle discussion on the expenditure of public money. He hardly ventured to stand up and say what the Liberal Party were capable of, or what they were not capable of; but, so far as his own experience went, he was inclined to say that the question must be answered without reference to the side of the House on which the Liberal Party were for the time being seated.”—(3 *Hansard*, [274] 300.)

That is our position to-night. We say—“Whatever your promise may be, we will put no more faith in it than you were prepared to put in the promise of the Liberal Government when this identical Amendment was moved in 1882.” All the Amendments that have been moved from this side of the House to-night were Amendments supported by the Tory Party; all the arguments used are identical, therefore I have no great inclination to put great trust either in the Tory or any other Government.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Hon. Members on these Benches extremely regret the continued tone of negation adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith). It is true that this Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) is analogous to his last Amendment, but they are by no means similar. They do not cover the same ground. When the right hon. Gentleman said that it would be easy to find four Members on this side of the House who would occupy six hours in making their speeches, he laid down a proposition which I am not disposed to dispute; but he must remember that this is a provision intended for the protection not so much of the Irish, as of the English Members. My hon. Friend comes forward and proposes this Amendment, well knowing that the time will come when it will be necessary for English Members to have some safeguard against the abuse of the rights of the clôture by the Government of the day. For our own part, Sir, our interest in the affairs of this House is but of a passing and transient character. We do not expect to be here much longer, and we, with the greatest readiness possible,

[Fifth Night.]

will allow you to recast your Rules as soon as we have left; but, in the meantime, while we continue to take a part in the deliberations of this House, we are also entitled to take a part in the framing of the Regulations which govern debate; and I think the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury might see his way to make a gracious concession; because, after all his refusals, any concession would be gracious. It is time to make a concession of the kind indicated by my hon. Friend. We feel sure the right hon. Gentleman does not wish, on this occasion, to meet us with a refusal. The Amendment simply ensures that there shall be no immediate and improper exercise of the right of the *clôture*. As the Rule now stands it is possible for the Question to be proposed, and then for the Leader of the House to stop discussion, and the danger will be greatest when Mr. Speaker is out of the Chair. I do not believe we should be likely to see anything so indecent as an appeal being made to Mr. Speaker to apply the *clôture* before any discussion has taken place on the Question before the House; but when Mr. Speaker is out of the Chair, and we have, perhaps, a casual Chairman presiding, a Minister may be anxious to get money, there being only two or three days before the end of the financial year, and it being desirable to push through the Appropriation Bill, and we may find ourselves silenced without discussion. It is to guard against the improper pushing forward of Money Bills that we are anxious to have this Amendment. If it is accepted, it does not follow that the four speakers shall be all on one side of the House. I altogether dispute the construction put on the Amendment that it would have the effect of confining debates to four speeches. Such a question would never arise.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): [*Cries of "Divide!"*] I must say that a great deal of the time of this House is wasted in unnecessary interruptions. The impatience which is frequently shown by hon. Gentlemen opposite, even whilst speakers are endeavouring to address the House for the first time in the Session, accounts for the prolongation of discussion. It is in human nature to resent such interruption. If it were a Rule of the House that the *clôture* could

not be imposed until at least four Members had spoken in opposition, there would be no impatience shown until four Members had addressed the House. The House should remember that questions arise which are of great importance to particular districts, but which the majority of the House may care nothing about. In such cases the majority will become impatient, and will, in a very short time, think that the debate has lasted long enough. I maintain that it would never be possible to bring out grievances affecting particular classes and particular districts, under the Rule as at present laid down. I think there should be some protection for these classes and districts, therefore I beg to support the Amendment.

MR. PARNELL: As the principle of the present Amendment and that which has just been decided are somewhat alike, I will not put the House to the trouble of a Division, but will ask for leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."
—(*Mr. Esslemont*.)

MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope it will be possible for the House to proceed somewhat further.

MR. PARNELL: I admit that the progress we have made may appear somewhat slow, if you measure it by a foot rule; but I think the right hon. Gentleman opposite will admit that you cannot proceed in that way in estimating the progress which has been made. Our progress has been real and considerable. We have decided many points of principle which will not be again raised. What has been done and said has tended to clear away subsequent matters. I think we have reached a point at which we might very profitably adjourn. The Amendment which the hon. Gentleman who moved the adjournment has to propose raises a very important question that the Government have undertaken to consider. Very possibly they may be able to agree to these words. We can scarcely come to a decision to-night, and an adjournment will afford the Govern-

ment an opportunity of considering the matter.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry I feel it my duty to press my objection to the adjournment. I am of opinion that the Amendment next on the Paper may be disposed of in a very few minutes by a statement I have to make. If the hon. Member wishes to persevere with that Amendment, we may, at least, enter upon it and take the pleasure of the House after the statement I have to make.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I anticipate that the answer the First Lord of the Treasury will give to my Amendment will tend very much to limit the discussion. I would call your attention, Sir, to the Rule passed in 1882. It will be there found that the *clôture* is to be applied to end any debate for the reason that the subject has been adequately discussed, and that it is the evident sense of the House, or of the Committee, that the Question be put. In proposing my Amendment, I do not anticipate as to who is to take the initiative in proposing the *clôture*, that point having to be discussed upon another Amendment. But I would put it to the right hon. Gentleman that he and those of his Colleagues who have spoken on these subjects have declared, with one voice, that it is not their intention to stifle discussion; and that it is not probable that the *clôture* will be applied until the House has had ample opportunity of discussing the question before it. Now, I submit with confidence to the House that, in future, the House will look at this question of the *clôture* in the light of the Rules of Procedure of 1882, and they cannot look at these Rules without taking into account that an important change is proposed on the present occasion. It seems to me that the removal of the words after "adequate debate," will imply the probability that the House anticipates the possibility of putting the Question without any discussion whatever; because, if that is not the intention, there can be no motive in removing the words. I will, therefore, without discussing the matter further, assume that the assurances we have received from Ministers imply that they are going to concede the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland (Mr.

Storey). As so young a Member of the House, I should not have interposed, had I not considered this Amendment of such great importance, and had I not believed it to be one which ought to be submitted to the sense of the House.

Amendment proposed in line 1 by inserting after the word "proposed," the words "and after adequate debate."—(Mr. Esslemont.)

Question proposed "That those words be there inserted."

MR. W. H. SMITH: I have frequently stated that there is no desire on the part of the Government to prevent debate on matters before the House. The House itself must be the judge of the adequacy of discussion. There is an Amendment on the Paper in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) which proposes to strike out the consent of the Speaker, and when that is disposed of—and I hope the House will not accept the Amendment, however great the authority of the hon. Member may be—if disposed of in the negative; my right hon. Friend the Member for Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth) will move the Amendment he has on the Paper in which he says that the Speaker or Chairman shall have regard to the general sense of the House or of the Committee, and likewise to the fair and reasonable Privileges of the minority. There is no intention on the part of the Government to interfere with the full liberty of the House, provided licence is not the interpretation of the word "liberty." The object the Government have in view is simply to regulate Business.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): After the statement made by the Leader of the House it will, I think, be desirable for my hon. Friend to withdraw his Amendment for the present in the view of the possibility of the Government, after all, being persuaded to accept the Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Cork and myself. If that should be accepted, on the right hon. Gentleman's own showing, I think it would be desirable for some words like those just moved to be inserted in the Resolution. There will be no cause for the declaration of the House, that it is the intention of the House that adequate discussion should take place. If the present Amendment is now pressed

to a Division, the point would be decided against us, and it would not be in Order to make the proposal again.

MR. ESSLEMONT: If it is understood that we shall have another opportunity of discussing this point, I withdraw my Amendment at the solicitation of my hon. Friend.

MR. PARNELL: Without prejudicing the Amendment of which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has expressed qualified approval, I must say that I must not be taken as in any sense agreeing with its adequacy. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Esslemont) must withdraw his Amendment without prejudice to the discussion of the point which his Amendment raises. I think, also, the debate should be adjourned now, in order that we may have an opportunity of considering the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman. I should like to know whether the Amendment now before the House can be moved hereafter — after the Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Bedford has been disposed of. The Amendment the hon. Member for East Aberdeen has moved is in Order where it is; but I am not certain that it would be in Order after the hon. Member for Bedford has moved his Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: I could not say at what particular point it could be introduced; but, no doubt, the substance of it could be moved hereafter.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made and Question proposed,
 "That the Debate be now adjourned."
 —(Mr. W. H. Smith.)

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at One o'clock,
 till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 28th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—
 Railway and Canal Traffic * (32).
Second Reading—Church Patronage (26), *debate*
adjourned.

Mr. Whitbread

DOVER (CORPORATION) HARBOUR BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

EARL STANHOPE, in moving that the Bill be now read the second time, said, that it affected only the Inner, or Commercial, Harbour at Dover, the control of which it proposed to transfer to the Corporation of the town. At present, the Harbour was managed by a Board consisting of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, two members of the Corporation, one member of the Board of Trade, two representatives of the two Railway Companies having termini at Dover, and a representative of the Admiralty. The chief business of the Board, however, was managed by a local committee of four in a hole-and-corner manner, for they sat with closed doors, and published no accounts. The Bill, which had nothing to do with the Outer Harbour, was supported by the Corporation, by the chief traders, and by the great majority of the ratepayers of Dover. The financial condition of the present Board was shown by the fact that they had to raise money at 4½ per cent; while their management of the Harbour had been so unsuccessful, that the amount of shipping using the Harbour had decreased during the last 20 years by 262 vessels. Thus, though the population of Dover in 1861 was 25,325, it rose in 1881 to 30,292; the rateable value had increased by 55,510 during the same period, and yet the shipping had decreased in number. It had been asserted that the Dover railway companies were hostile to the Bill. It would be found that they merely formally objected to the Second Reading of the Bill, in order to obtain a *locus standi* before the Committee. In his opinion, there could be no real ground of objection to a measure which had been introduced for the purpose of transferring the Harbour property to a well-constituted Corporation whose sole object would be to provide additional accommodation for the travelling public. It was hoped that, by better management, there would be more traffic and trade at Dover, as the new Board would be able to borrow money at a lower rate of interest than 4½ per cent—probably, say,

at 3 per cent—in order to make the improvements which were necessary to develop the Harbour, increase the shipping, and generally to provide greater conveniences for cross-Channel traffic. He contended that it was an anomaly that a prosperous town like Dover should have so very little control over their own harbour. He always understood that it was one of the great principles of the Party opposite that they always encouraged local efforts and local self-government; but on this occasion the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition (Earl Granville) seemed to have forgotten their cardinal principle, as he had given Notice of opposition. He (Earl Stanhope) could only imagine that the noble Earl's opposition was due not to any desire to prevent the Second Reading of the measure, but with the view of protecting some little patronage that he might have as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. He felt assured that all objections entertained by the noble Earl could be removed when the Bill was referred to a Committee; and he therefore now begged leave to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^d."
—(*The Earl Stanhope*.)

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I rise to make the Motion of which I have given Notice—namely, that the Bill be read a second time this day six months, and in doing so, it is scarcely necessary for me to deny that I have any personal motive in so doing. As Lord Warden, I am *ex officio* the Representative of the Crown on the Dover Harbour Board, with which this Bill deals. The other members of this representative Body are two burgesses elected by the Town Council, one Representative of the Board of Trade, one of the Admiralty, and one of each railway company having termini at Dover; the number of the Board being seven. The two Representatives of the Government on the Harbour Board and I have been placed in a great difficulty. If the Bill is, as appeared to us, contrary to the principles which, up to this time, have been adopted by successive Governments and by Parliament, and has no *prima facie* recommendations, it ought to be stopped by the Government. But if a change of views recommends itself to the Government, we asked ourselves whether we

had any right to ask—and we certainly had no wish to see—that the money of the Corporation and of the Harbour Board should be spent in Parliamentary Committees, instead of being applied to the proper purposes. In this dilemma, I applied to the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade for his advice, and he, in the straightforward and courteous way which has marked all his communications with me, gave us as his opinion that we ought to oppose the Bill. That has relieved us from great embarrassment; our course is clear. But it has not made me less anxious to secure the object without wasteful expenditure of the funds of the two public bodies at Dover. This Private Bill proposes to cancel the principal provisions of the Public Act of 1861, to dissolve the Harbour Board, and to transfer the harbour to the Dover Corporation. The Board has a considerable property, not derived from any local dues, but from former tolls on the passing trade. The revenue at present is spent in improvements on the Harbour, and in reducing the amount of dues on shipping entering the port. A Paper has been communicated to the Board of Trade, showing the great improvements which have been made by us, and the excellence of our financial position. The Bill proposes to transfer all the property and management of the Harbour to the Corporation, with power to apply the income and proceeds of the sale of the Harbour property to the paying off of the town debts and the improving of the town—in other words, to transfer property held in trust for public purposes to a Town Council, whose primary interest would be in the town and not in the Harbour purposes. The management is to be confined to a committee of the Town Council, with the same representatives as at present, of the Admiralty, the Board of Trade, and of the two railway companies. The Lord Warden is to be removed, and the Mayor and four more Town Councillors are to be added to those who now sit. The acts of the committee are subject to the Town Council, and the Representatives of the Government will have no place which is supreme. With regard to the removal of the Lord Warden from the Board, I may say the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Palmerston—former Lord Wardens—took especial interest in the work

of the Harbour. I have tried to follow the example of these illustrious men for more than 20 years. I believe, perhaps too fondly, that my independence of all local interests, and the facilities I had as a Representative of the Crown for communicating with successive Governments of all politics on the business of the Harbour, and thus keeping the Government and Board in harmony, has made me of some use. In personal qualifications, I do not deny that a town councillor might be much more than equal to me; but, in the course of nature, my tenure of the office must be short, and I much doubt whether even five town councillors, all liable to be changed every year—an important circumstance—would make up for the services of such men as the Duke of Wellington, Lord Dalhousie, Lord Palmerston, and of such as I hope will be my successors. I know that the President of the Board of Trade is of opinion that the Lord Warden should not be removed; but I pointed out to him that there would be some incongruity in asking such a man as, for instance, the Duke of Wellington to be a member of the committee of the Town Council, under the Mayor, and subject to the absolute control of a superior body. There is now an intimation that the Lord Warden, the Representative of the Crown, may appoint a representative of himself; but the privilege would not be of much value, as his nominee would be in the same hopeless minority as the Representatives of the Government Departments. I do not clearly gather from the noble Earl (Earl Stanhope) what are the *primâ facie* arguments in favour of the Bill. It is stated that the Government Departments have come to an agreement as to important alterations. But with whom? Neither the Town Council, nor any committee appointed by them, have been consulted or know anything of these alterations. It is stated that the Town Council can, by their credit, give pecuniary aid to the Harbour. The Harbour Board is much obliged at this additional proof of the proverb, that everybody likes to lend to the rich. The Harbour Board has a large property, they can borrow quite as cheaply as the town, and they think the offer a poor compensation for the power claimed to use the Harbour property for town uses. It is said that an arrangement has been come

to with the railways. It is possible that this has been done privately; but the South Eastern Company's shipping interest is in Folkestone, not in Dover Harbour. As to the London and Chatham, they may be asked, "It is all very well to dissemble your love, but why do you kick me downstairs?" They have presented a Petition complaining, among other things, of the gross injustice of the composition of the committee of the Town Council and of the power reserved to the Town Council. All the noble Earl's statements are, if I may use the phrase, begging the question—assumptions. He assumes that, if the transfer is made to the shifting body of the Town Council Committee, with the Government Representatives in a helpless minority, great results will flow—more ships in an improved harbour, and greater facilities for continental traffic. If these anticipations have any solid ground, the present management must have been bad in failing to secure such improvements. But I can show that any such insinuation can only be an afterthought. When the Bill was first proposed to the Town Council, the proposer stated distinctly, without a dissentient voice being heard, that there was no complaint against the administration of the Harbour Board. Some such complaints have since appeared, founded on mis-statement of facts; but the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade, 14 days ago, with his usual courtesy, confirmed to the deputation which waited upon him, the assurance of the proposer of the Bill that there were no such complaints, and he assured us that we were not in any sense on our defence. Further, than this, an overwhelming majority of the traders and shipowners, the local parties who are interested in the Harbour, are opposed to the Bill. They have petitioned Parliament against it, urging, among other reasons, that it is unjust to divert Harbour revenues to other purposes, and objecting to the management being placed in the hands of persons who have no knowledge whatever of the duties they will be called upon to perform, and who, before they have time to acquire that knowledge, might all be superseded by others no better qualified than themselves. A considerable number of the most important ratepayers are also against it; but I admit that a majority

are in its favour. Indeed, it would be odd if they were not so. The present Board is representative and without any pecuniary interest. Though they have always endeavoured to benefit the town, when compatible with their duty to the Harbour, their primary object has been the Harbour. But for the ratepayers, their primary interest is in the Borough; and it is natural that they should be tempted by the idea of discharging the town debts and of improving the town by means of the Harbour property, derived not from local rates, but from former passing tolls. Also there are many ratepayers holders of leases, some of which will shortly expire, and there is to be found in the Bill a peculiar provision which they must greatly appreciate. I do not think that I can be contradicted in saying that the transfer is contrary to the principles on which the Board of Trade and Parliament have acted for many years up to the present day. In some places harbours used to be in the hands of Town Councils, and it was found that their funds were often diverted to local purposes of a different character; and therefore since the passing of the Town Dues Act, the efforts of successive Governments have successfully placed harbours in independent hands. It is true that there are two small ports—King's Lynn and, I believe, Preston—where the money has been provided by security on the town rates, and where, naturally, the management rests with the Town Council. But no such example exists with regard to large national harbours in this country; they are all managed by independent authorities, and that policy has always been upheld by Parliament. Your Lordships will have remarked that my contention is, that this Bill is not founded on any charge of mal-administration by the present Harbour Board, and that it proposes a policy in direct opposition to that which has been advocated by successive Governments and by Parliament up to the present time, and that no arguments of any weight have been advanced for such a change. But, even if the substance of the Bill was good, there is a grave objection of form which must be fatal to it. It is a Private Bill, promoted suddenly at the latest moment consistent with the Standing Orders. This Private Bill cancels the principal provisions of a

public Act of 1861. Such a proposal, now made for the first time, is contrary to the principles and practice of Private Bill Legislation, and would, as many of your Lordships must be aware, have excited the lively indignation of the late lamented Lord Redesdale. It is certain that he would never have been a party to it. The noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade will probably make a statement to your Lordships. I know that he is hampered by a pledge he gave to the Promoters of the Bill, that he would not oppose the Bill. It was shown at a meeting of the Board of Trade that this decision was founded on exclusively one-sided information; but what I would request the noble Lord to state is, whether, at the time of his decision, his attention had been called, or whether it had occurred to him, that this Bill is, as I have said, contrary to the principles and to the practice of Private Bill Legislation in this House, dealing in the manner it does with a public Act. I think I have a right to appeal to the noble Duke the Chairman of Committees, whether it is in his opinion well to create such an innovation; and I would extend the appeal to noble and learned Lords who have studied and observed the ways of this House. It has been urged that the principle of this Bill is a great one—namely, the extension of local government. I am in favour of such a principle, and I think it desirable that municipalities should have increased power; but the principle of self-government is that those who pay should be represented in the body that spends their money, not, as it will be in this case, the money of others; but the question remains whether this extension should be, in this particular direction, by means of a Private Bill. If the Government think this change of policy should be adopted, they should propose a public enactment dealing with the general question. But even if they shrink from being logical, and prefer to make the experiment at first only in one instance, let them give that experiment the best chance. Let Glasgow or Liverpool try it with their great and powerful Corporations. The Corporation of Dover is most respectable; but it is only the ruling body of a small town which cannot be put in comparison with the great cities I have named in import-

ance, wealth, or population; and, on the other hand, Dover Harbour is not a mere local harbour. It is a national port, and one of the chief highways to the Continent. It is strongly fortified. A great extension of the Harbour has been sanctioned for Imperial purposes, and the last Committee of the House of Commons recommended, in accordance with Minutes of the Treasury and the Board of Trade, that it should be placed under the present Board, strengthened, not by more members of the Corporation, but by more Representatives of the Government Departments. I venture to say to your Lordships, do whatever may be right, but do it in the right way. This House is subject, like other institutions, perhaps more so, to criticisms, sometimes of a friendly, sometimes of a hostile character. I, like others of your Lordships, have not shrunk in this House and out of it, sometimes before most unfavourable audiences, to defend it against accusations which seemed to be unjust. One of our battle-horses has always been the admirable, judicious conduct by this House of its Private Business; I appeal to your Lordships whether we have yet heard any single argument in favour of the advantage, the importance, and the urgency of this Bill, to induce you to abandon all the time-honoured traditions of our Private Bill Legislation in this Assembly, in order to encourage such a measure as this. The noble Earl concluded by moving the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Earl Granville.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Lord STANLEY OF PRESTON) said, the matter was not one of such great dimensions as the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) appeared to have assumed, and the course that had been adopted was not contrary to the public interest, or to the usual course pursued in questions of the kind. Notwithstanding what the noble Earl had said, he (Lord Stanley of Preston) contended that the Board of Trade neither had, nor was it their province to take up a position antagonistic to the Harbour Board on the one hand, or one of encouragement to the promotion of this

measure on the other. Having regard to precedent, they had looked only to the general feeling of the town in the matter, and, doing so, there was reason why the Board should not oppose the Bill *ab initio*, but should allow it to be subjected to thorough investigation, and to stand or fall by its own merit. He could join the noble Earl in the tribute he had paid to the Dover Harbour Board, as to the manner in which that body had carried on its financial and other work; but, while he said that, he could not disguise from himself the fact that there was a strong feeling in the town that there had not been that advance as to harbour facilities in the Port of Dover which might have been expected, and which the current trade of the place demanded; and it was felt that if the Harbour was in the hands of persons who were more deeply concerned in the interests and trade of the port—who would take a more lively interest in its affairs, and who would have the power of raising loans on the larger security of the Borough rates—great advantages would be gained. When the matter came before him in December last, he suggested that certain alterations should be made in the Bill, and that it should, before passing, be referred to a Hybrid Committee of either House for consideration. He did not think that the course taken was exceptional, further than that, in this case, there were naval and military considerations mixed up with the municipal and commercial question; but the Bill would not interfere with the outer roadstead or the Admiralty Pier, and it was not opposed by the Naval and Military Authorities. He had a list of 20 cases in which Corporations acted as Harbour Authorities; and there were other cases in which Corporations, although they were not themselves the Harbour Authorities, practically controlled those who were. The promoters of the Bill, he believed, were quite ready to adopt a clause to secure that the Harbour dues should always be applied to Harbour purposes; and, therefore, the Board of Trade had allowed the Bill to go forward. He did not appear as either the advocate, or the opponent of the Bill. At the same time, he felt very strongly that where a town was endeavouring, and making strenuous efforts to increase the trading facilities of its port, and doing so in a manner which, as it seemed

to him, did not appear to interfere with other public interests, it was not the duty of the Board of Trade to stand in the way. He believed their Lordships would be well advised if they allowed the Bill to be read a second time, as, in that case, another tribunal could deal with the complicated points at issue, and, after inquiry of that kind, their Lordships would be in a position more clearly to determine whether, on the whole, the points advanced by the noble Earl were such as outweighed the general considerations in favour of the Bill.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he opposed the second reading of the Bill, on the ground that no reply had been given to the objection of his noble Friend (Earl Granville); that the Bill was practically a private measure which proposed to interfere with a body which had been created by a public Act for public purposes, and reasons of national import. No one could doubt that if it were impossible to separate the management of the Inner Harbour from that of the Roadstead local interests must be subordinated to those of the nation. He objected to public legislation being repealed by means of private Bills, considering it a most dangerous thing, as the latter had not the same safeguards.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, it was important to adhere to principle in these matters, and the principle which had been firmly established for many years in appointing Harbour Boards was that of having them elected expressly for Harbour purposes. He had received that morning a paper which had the appearance of coming from his own side of the House; but it had led him to the conclusion that he should vote against the second reading unless there was more to be said for it than he had heard yet.

EARL STANHOPE said, he could assure their Lordships that the Harbour finances would, if the Bill passed, be entirely distinct from those of the local government of the town, and that no part of the Harbour property would be devoted to Corporation uses. As to the objection raised regarding the repeal of a Public Act by a Private Bill, he might say that the Admiralty had insisted that the provisions of the Dover Harbour Act of 1882 should be repealed.

But, at any rate, the noble Duke the Chairman of Committees (the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos) had, after full consideration, allowed the Bill to proceed to a Second Reading, and, therefore, had practically over-ruled the objection.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he trusted some Member of the Government would offer some reply to the point raised by his noble and learned Friend (the Earl of Selborne) in regard to a matter of great national importance. The only important harbour managed by a Corporation was that of Bristol.

EARL GRANVILLE asked if they were to have no further declaration of the views of the Government on this matter? He was entirely in ignorance whether they were going to support or vote against the ordinary principle and practice of both Houses with regard to Private Bills overlapping public measures.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, he had always been brought up to believe that these matters were not to be made Party measures.

EARL GRANVILLE said, he had not sought to make this a Party matter.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, it was a question of the practice of the House. As to the remarks of the noble and learned Earl opposite (the Earl of Selborne), he (the Marquess of Salisbury) must say he had the greatest possible respect for him; but he had always thought, when on the Front Opposition Bench, and when the noble and learned Earl was Lord Chancellor, that he was a little of a formalist in these matters, and he thought so still. He thought the noble and learned Earl wrong then, and he thought him wrong still. He thought the House might judge of these matters for itself, and to declare that something laid down by a Public Act could never be infringed upon by a Private Bill, was to lay down a rule which could not possibly be observed, and which was absolutely untenable in practice. It was obvious that any kind of Private Bill Legislation must upset something which had been provided by Public Statute, and such a doctrine as the noble and learned Earl had attempted to lay down was abso-

lutely unfitted to the practice of the House. The matter was one that depended a good deal upon details which could be argued better before a Private Bill Committee than in that House. It seemed to him to be eminently a Bill which was fitted to be dealt with by a Private Bill Committee. If he were asked whether he would vote in favour of, or against, the Bill becoming law, he might have some difficulty in giving a final answer at present; but he was not asked that question. He was asked whether it was not a Bill that ought to be decided by a Private Bill Committee; and as this was a matter which was to be argued out before the proper tribunal, he would say that the Bill ought to be sent before a Select Committee. The matter was one which depended a good deal upon details, upon the evidence of individuals; and he thought it would be more proper that it should be argued in a Committee than before that House.

LORD HERSCHELL said, it was not a mere question of a Private Bill interfering with the enactments of a Public Bill. It was a question of a Private Bill introduced by a Corporation, for the purpose of taking to themselves the property of a Body constituted by a Public Act for a public purpose. There was no precedent for such a course of procedure as that, and no case had been cited by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley of Preston) of its ever having been done. If they passed the Bill, they would lay down a precedent which might be followed by every town possessing a harbour.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he was bound to call their Lordships' attention to the fact that there were precedents in favour of the Amendment of a Public Act by private legislation. The case of the Thames Embankment and the Metropolitan District Railway went to prove there was no absolute and inflexible rule against infringing Public Acts in a Private Bill.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he must point out that what he said was that there was no precedent for a Private Bill taking away from a Public Authority powers which it possesses, and which had been conferred upon it by Act of Parliament.

On Question, That "now" stand part of the Motion? their Lordships divided:—Contents 50; Not-contents 45: Majority 5.

Resolved in the Affirmative.

Bill read 2^d accordingly.

ARMY—ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE, SANDHURST, AND ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH—REPORT OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL of STRAFFORD, in rising to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, Whether any of the recommendations of the Board of Visitors at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich (presented to Parliament in 1886), have been or are likely to be carried out? said, he wished to point out that the Report of the Board of Visitors on the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, for 1886 stated that the annual inspection was made on the 30th of June last. The health of the cadets was reported good, the average daily number of sick being 3·78 on an average strength of 304. Discipline was also good, unpunctuality being the principal shortcoming. The conduct, tone, and spirit were also stated to be good. The Board recommended that a sword of honour should be given to the best conducted of those about to get a commission, as at Woolwich. Shooting with the rifle and revolver were reported good, owing to many cadets belonging voluntarily to a rifle club. The Board recommended for consideration that a practical course of shooting with both weapons should be introduced as a voluntary subject, and that the cadets should have rifle instruction, with a view to their utility with their regiments. It was further pointed out that the quartermaster, who acted for both Staff and Cadet Colleges in that capacity, and as acting Ordnance and Commissariat Officer, only received the pay of an Infantry quartermaster. This case appeared to be very exceptional, and the Board were of opinion that it required exceptional treatment. Then there was the question of gas in the riding school. The Board fully concurred in the recommendation that the introduction and use of gas would make it possible for riding classes to be held

on winter afternoons. In regard to the changes in hospital arrangements, he remarked that the previous recommendations of the Board had been fully carried out, and the medical officer was completely satisfied with the present arrangements. The furniture in the cadets' ante-rooms was certainly unfit for further use, and the Board recommended this as a case for favourable consideration. The clerks' and mess meeting rooms were devoid of ventilation, and lighted only by skylights which did not open; they were unfit for habitation. The Board recommended the opening out of a window in each room, which could be done at a small expense and would look well. The Board also recommended a new roof for the racquet-court, as the defective and leaky condition of the old one rendered the court useless in wet weather, when it was most needed. The former recommendations which had not received attention were (1) accommodation of the servants in the College estate, which was desirable both from a disciplinary and sanitary view; (2) provision of lavatory and dressing room adjoining gymnasium, the cost of which was proposed to be equally divided between the War Department and the Royal Military College Mess Fund. With these exceptions the Board were highly gratified with the result of the inspection. The visit to Woolwich Academy was made on July 2, 1886. In this case it was found that the normal number of terms (two) per year and the courses of study had been returned to, the extraordinary circumstance of the last two years having ceased. The deficient accommodation for cadets was strongly remarked upon by the Board. There were 230 cadets on the roll—30 over the establishment—22 rooms holding three cadets each. At the last visit of the Board, 15 rooms held three cadets each, and on that occasion the Board animadverted on the arrangement, which forbids privacy to the cadets, and prevents the erection of partitions in the rooms. The conduct of the cadets was good, the large number of terms, numbering 16, which were lost being attributable to the admission of nearly all qualified candidates. The reception of cadets suffering from illnesses of an infectious order, or requiring isolation, was at the Herbert Hospital. The Governor of

the Royal Military Academy, who had no control here, stated that the accommodation was only that of a private soldier. The Board most fully endorsed his recommendation that a private room should be fitted up for the accommodation of cadets so suffering. The hot-water supply to the bath rooms was still deficient, although recommended by the Board on two previous occasions. The daily average of sick was shown to be 2·9 on an average of 219 cadets.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS), in reply, said, the recommendations of the Board of Visitors, of which the noble Earl (the Earl of Strafford) was Chairman, were considered so important by the present First Lord of the Treasury, the War Office, and by the Secretary of State that they had endeavoured, as largely and rapidly as possible, to carry out the changes recommended in the Report; but he was sorry to say they had not been able to carry out all the changes in such a way as the Report suggested. The difficulty of finding sufficient sleeping accommodation for the number of cadets at Woolwich was one of funds. The estimate for the work was £22,000, but it was not practicable to find the money at present, in view of many other Services of an even more urgent character. An arrangement was, however, in contemplation for reducing the length of the course, by which the number of cadets at one time would be reduced, thereby increasing the accommodation for those who were there. The room at the Herbert Hospital which the Board suggested should be fitted up for the reception of cases of infectious disease, was, he regretted to say, not available at present, but as soon as possible the matter would be dealt with. With regard to Sandhurst, nearly all the recommendations had been carried out. It had been determined to confer some distinction, as a sword of honour, on the best-conducted cadet of those about to be commissioned at the end of each half-year. Ammunition for voluntary revolver shooting had been issued to the cadets, but it had not been thought necessary to make shooting a part of the course. The recommendations with regard to Woolwich would be carried out by the War Department as rapidly as circumstances permitted.

THE CURRENCY, GOLD AND SILVER
(ROYAL COMMISSION).

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, in rising to call the attention of the House to the terms of reference in the instructions to the Royal Commissioners appointed 21st September, 1886, to inquire into matters connected with the currency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; and to ask Her Majesty's Government, if they would consent to amend the terms of reference for the purpose of including in the scope of the Inquiry before the Commission a special reference to Agriculture, namely, as to whether the appreciation of gold and the difference in the exchange value of the rupee in England and in India had had any special effect on the agricultural industry of the United Kingdom; and whether the continued fall in the value of all agricultural produce, and consequently of the selling value of land in England and Ireland, was in any degree attributable to a disturbance of values brought by currency complications? said, he had very great hesitation in bringing the subject before their Lordships, not only on account of the extremely uninviting character of the subject and the difficulty of dealing sufficiently with all its details, but also because it was one that required a long and careful statement. Questions connected with the currency had formed the subject of inquiry to many persons, and at the present time a great portion of the Press, especially in the North of England, was filled with daily contributions on this subject from persons who were connected with trade and agriculture. The subject had been brought prominently to the notice of their Lordships in the report of the late Lord Iddesleigh's Commission on the Depression of Trade. It had been brought to his (the Duke of Marlborough's) attention in attempting to arrive at some ground for explaining to himself the reasons for the great commercial depression which had extended over every branch of our industries. In studying the question it appeared to him—as it did to that Commission—that the appreciation of gold and the difference in the exchange value of the rupee in England and in India had a wider bearing on the existing depression than was sometimes acknowledged. There was nothing more certain than that the one

object which they should seek to arrive at was the stability of value. As this country became more divided by an advancing civilization into the two classes of creditor and debtor, of capital and labour, it became more and more necessary that the relations between them should be of a fixed and permanent character. Generation after generation pledged the credit of the future generation which succeeded; and unless the medium of exchange which was the standard of value was of a fixed character the one class would suffer for the advantage of the other. Now, it was his object to lay before their Lordships certain arguments and reasons which bore upon the subject from the point of view of whether any one of those interests had suffered to the advantage of the other. History taught that stability of value in trade was the invariable accompaniment of political quiet and contentment, and wherever we found the classes engaged in trade suffering in their manufactures there one always found political unrest and disquiet. The fluctuations in trade and in the exchanges of value had been aptly compared with the diurnal phenomena of oceans and storms. Of such phenomena Lord Liverpool was an early observer; for it was in 1805—he (the Duke of Marlborough) thought—that he (Lord Liverpool) laid down his theories as to the principles upon which our currency should be based. He was unfortunately accepted as a true prophet in his day, but, nevertheless, he spoke with hesitation as to the consequences of his theory and the results of the legislation he proposed. On page 161 of his letter he said—

“I do not pretend that a new system of coinage founded on the principles which I have endeavoured to establish will be in all respects perfect; for the nature of the subject does not admit of absolute perfection. I am sensible that it will be liable to the first of the imperfections stated in an earlier part of this letter—that is, that the metal of which this standard coin or principal measure of property is to be made will vary in its value in successive periods, even with respect to itself. It has been shown that this imperfection is so inherent in the subject that it does not admit of a remedy. This variation may be occasioned either by a greater or less production of the mines from which one or other of these precious metals is obtained.”

When, however, Lord Liverpool's legislation was adopted by this country, the enormous expansion in the volume of trade was not and never could have been

foreseen any more than the enormous effects brought about by the introduction of steam and electricity in altering the whole conditions of our mercantile arrangements. Now, the important fact with regard to this question was that as the volume of trade had expanded the volume of the currency had remained the same. It was manifest that if the volume of produce decreased very rapidly and the volume of currency remained stagnant prices would rise; wherever, on the other hand, the body of currency diminished and the volume of produce increased there was a fall. The question then arose in what degree the depression of trade since 1870 had been brought about by a scarcity of the currency. He thought that it could be shown that the whole of our commercial and agricultural depression was owing to the appreciation of the gold standard. From statistics which were available it could at once be seen whether the production of gold was increasing in a sufficient ratio as compared with the increasing volume of trade. Previous to the year 1870 the large discoveries of gold in California and in Australia had caused some £30,000,000 of gold to be poured into Europe. Since 1870, however, the production of gold had fallen to £17,000,000 annually, nearly one-half of which was absorbed by the arts. Therefore, during the last 15 years there had only been some £130,000,000 of gold available for the currency of the world. Moreover, during the whole of that time there had been great demands made upon the gold resources. Thus, since 1873 Germany had consumed £80,000,000, the United States £100,000,000, and Italy £20,000,000 in replacing their silver by a gold currency, making a total of £200,000,000 of gold which had been absorbed by those three nations. During the same period India had likewise absorbed some £4,000,000 of gold annually. Nothing was more curious in connection with that question than the fact that the output of gold and silver taken together had hardly varied at all during the period to which he had referred. In 1870 the output of gold was £21,500,000, and in 1885 it was £17,000,000; whereas in 1870 the output of silver was £10,333,000, and in 1885 it was £21,000,000. Therefore, the combined output of gold and silver was £31,700,000 in 1870 and £38,000,000

in 1885. These figures showed a slow but healthy growth in mining industries which was consistent with the rise in the volume of trade. Therefore, if silver had not been demonetized we should not have suffered from the great commercial crisis through which we were now passing. A well-known Member of the other House of Parliament had delivered an address on this subject which was well worthy of attention. Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., in referring to the fall in the value of gold and silver taken together, said—

“Allowing that there are about equal values of the two metals in the world, in place of gold values falling 40 per cent and silver values 10 per cent, in silver countries there would have been an average fall of 25 per cent all round. The last crushing 15 per cent falls with crushing effect upon trade.”

How did this appreciation of gold and this depreciation of silver affect the two great classes in this country which represented capital and labour, or perhaps he might say creditor and debtor? Capitalists of all descriptions found that the 3 or 4 per cent which they received in the shape of interest upon their funds had a greater purchasing power than it had formerly, while the manufacturer had had to sacrifice more and more of his produce every year to pay his gold debt. It would, perhaps, be useful for him at this point to call attention to England's standing capital account. On the capital side of the account must be placed the public Debt of £750,000,000, bearing £23,000,000 interest; railway bonds and preference shares, £500,000,000, bearing £20,000,000 interest; municipal debts, £160,000,000, bearing £6,400,000 interest; land mortgages, £500,000,000, bearing £20,000,000 interest; capital mortgages, £500,000,000, bearing £20,000,000 interest; town rents, £30,000,000 a-year; mining royalties, £8,000,000 a-year; and annuities, £18,000,000 a-year. This gave a total capital of £4,000,000,000, which was probably about half the capital of the country, bearing interest to the amount of £150,000,000 per annum, which had to be paid out of the labour produce of the country. One peculiar feature of the present state of things was that the money market was in a perpetual state of commotion, that there were constant fluctuations in the Bank rate, and that the trader was continually involved in difficulties which it was impossible for

him to foresee beforehand. There was much difficulty at the present time to find any really good and sound investment for capital. If it were possible to find any substance which could be made to serve as a legal tender in place of gold for the payment of debts and of taxes, there would be a cessation of those difficulties which were connected with the fluctuations of the Bank rate—that was to say, that the banks would no longer be able to make a large profit out of the depressed condition of trade. It had always been the case, from time immemorial, that silver had been a legal tender in this country, and it was still a legal tender among 700,000,000 of the population of the world. A paper currency would not pay debts, because its value depended upon its foreign exchange. If silver could be used to-day at its market value to discharge debts its value would rise permanently to 15½ to 16 to 1 compared with gold. It was remarkable how exactly the value of wheat rose and fell with that of silver. This Commission had been instructed to inquire into the effect of the rate of exchange upon the trade of this country with India during the last 20 years. The Commission was instructed to inquire whether there had been an appreciation of the gold and a depreciation of the silver standard; but there was no Instruction to the Commission to inquire into the effect, if any, which had been produced upon our agriculture, and to ask whether agriculture in this country was suffering from a state of things in which a bonus was given to the Indian cultivator, which bonus was withdrawn from the English. In England and in our Colonies we had a gold currency; in India we had a silver currency; and therefore we had, by some means or other, to try to arrive at a stable exchange between the two. If there was a silver currency in so near a country as Scotland, while we had a gold currency in England, we should at once see the falseness of the position. As silver became of less and less value in England, Scotchmen would be able to export their cattle at cheaper prices to the disadvantage of the English agriculturist, and we should not long stand such a state of things. The question of the currency had an intimate bearing on the whole social relations of the

country, since it affected the debtor and the creditor, and if the interest of the one was advanced to the detriment of the other we should have instability in the social condition. The noble Duke concluded by asking the Question of which he had given Notice.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): The noble Duke (the Duke of Marlborough) has approached the subject in a very interesting speech—a subject which often elicits high individual ability, but which, according to my observations, seldom attracts very enthusiastic attention on the part of any assembly. I do not presume to be confident in following the noble Duke into the very abstruse portions of his speech; but I may say, in answer to his Question, that I have put myself in communication with the Chairman of the Commission which is appointed to inquire into the subject, and he assures me that the terms of Reference under which they act include the matter which the noble Duke desires to see included—namely, the effect which the appreciation of gold and the undoubted difference in the exchange value of the rupee has had upon the agriculture of this country. I feel the greater hesitation in following the noble Duke because most of the matters to which he has referred are *sub judice* in this Commission; they are precisely the matters to which the Commission is giving its attention, upon which it is receiving a great deal of evidence, and upon which we may hope to have a deliverance before long. I agree with the noble Duke as to the extreme importance of the question. It is important to agriculture as well as to all branches of production in this country. It is not in itself abstruse, it is very obvious, that if the price of gold is rising, the price of other produce for which gold is given will fall, and the position of the producer, whether manufacturer or agriculturist, is this—while the price of his produce falls immediately, the interest of the capital which he has borrowed to carry on his business does not fall at all, and the wages which he pays his workmen do not fall for a long time, for men are very tenacious of the nominal rate of wages. It therefore follows, as a matter of course, that any fall of the standard of value must bear hardly upon

all producers, and upon all those who sustain the commerce and manufacture and agriculture of the country—on all those, in short, who gain their livelihood not so much by labour as by risk. But when the noble Duke goes on to say—as I understand him to say—that the whole of the suffering which the land has experienced during the last few years is due to this appreciation of gold, I think he exaggerates its effects a good deal. There have been too many obvious causes besides the appreciation of gold under which the landowner and land occupier suffer. There has been a succession of the most unfavourable seasons, and the extreme competition of America, which is not produced by any fall or rise in the standard of values but simply by the acceleration in the methods of communication, which undoubtedly, in the first instance, has produced this fall of prices from which agriculture suffers. The question, again, as to the remedy is not, in my judgment, so simple as the noble Duke deems it to be. It would be rather hasty to speak positively before we have the evidence of the Commission before us; but it is by no means proved that any Government has it in its power to remedy this disturbance of the standard of value, even though we admitted that this disturbance is guilty of all the results which the noble Duke imputes to it. There are several things to be proved which are not proved yet. We must show that it is possible for us to get rid of the difference of standard which exists between England and India, or, we might say, between India and Europe. Everything which we have been able to learn shows that it would be a task of the extremest difficulty, and it is a task from which all Indian statesmen have shrunk. You cannot deal by logical propositions with the sentiments of a people—still less with the sentiments of a people numbering such multitudes as are found within the confines of India, so deeply attached to the conditions under which they have lived for centuries past. I have seen schemes for altering the standard in India; I have no doubt the noble Viscount beside me (Viscount Cross) and the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Kimberley) have seen such schemes; but I have seen none that would commend themselves to the judgment of any Ministry. Again, any advantage to be produced by the bi-metallic

remedy, supposing it were possible—which has not been proved—to establish a permanent relation of value between silver and gold, and to prevent circumstances from altering their substantial values when the nominal values are fixed by law, you could only realize by an agreement among all the coin-using nations of the world. What chance is there of that? I am afraid we must advance very much more than we have done in the path of International Concert before any such achievement can be anything but a speculation. My Lords, these are very interesting subjects, but they are far too abstruse to be dealt with in an Assembly such as this. They have been referred to a Commission, which is examining them with great care, and which, I trust, will before long give matter for consideration to those interested in the question. I can assure the noble Duke and the House that the matters of profound importance to which he has called attention are being the subject of the investigation of the Commission, and they will give them all the consideration in their power.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.—(No. 26.)

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the scheme was not a new one. He had been allowed, on a previous occasion, to enter into a detailed statement of its provisions. The Bill embodied a scheme which had grown into its present shape very gradually, and after a great deal of careful review and supervision. In 1874 a Select Committee of the House of Lords was appointed on the matter, after that a Royal Commission sat, and Bills had been brought before both Houses. The subject had been before the clergy in Convocation and before the House of Laymen, and by all these Bodies the principles of the Bill had been approved. Since the Bill was before their Lordships last Session 13 Diocesan Conferences, besides those which had done so previously, had also considered and approved it. Only one Diocesan Conference had pronounced unfavourably to the Bill, or, rather, had declined to recommend it

as originally introduced. The very important Select Committee of last Session had treated the Bill in a way for which all who cared for its principles must be grateful. Their Lordships might, therefore, feel well assured that the Bill had received—word by word—the most careful consideration. The only material alteration made since the Select Committee reported on the Bill was in Clause 10. It was now proposed that members should hold office for three years from the time of the triennial election, and not from the time of their own election, if they had been elected at a broken period. There was nothing now to prevent what it was hoped that henceforth a real check would be placed upon—namely, the exceedingly gross evils which attended the sale and transfer of patronage. The very terms of the law as they now existed were actually used as a means of furthering these gross evils. Facts which existed by provisions of the law were sometimes made the most effective instruments for promoting transactions of which they were all ashamed. The evils were not very wide, and the prevalence of them was exaggerated; but although not very wide they were very gross. As scandals they were particularly offensive to the most sensitive feelings about subjects of the most sacred character. They wounded our sense of right in regions in which right ought to be absolute. As weapons they were most effective in the hands of the enemies of the Church, though the Church herself might be as keen and as anxious as possible to have the evils redressed. But what was worst of all was that the scandals to which he referred brought wrongs and injuries to the parishes subject to these transactions, and they must recognize the fact that the evils weakened the Church where she ought to be strongest—in her ministry. Those evils, then, ought to be met just as other gross, yet not widespread, evils were met—by legislation, which would most carefully and cautiously touch the evils without inflicting any further disaster. It was no defence of them to say that they introduced excellent men of means into livings. That was not denied; but, under any circumstances, such men—whom the Church so valued for their work—would be always forthcoming, and would enter on it by ways more satisfactory to themselves. There were

hundreds of patrons to whom the advowsons possessed no money value. Nothing would induce them to part with an advowson for money. Many other patrons in selling would only dispose of the advowsons to persons who would take the utmost care as to the use to which they might be applied. But beyond these two broad bands of patrons—those who would not sell an advowson for money, and those who, while exercising the right to sell, took precaution, that they were selling only to persons who would exercise the right as they themselves did—there was what he might call a floating zone of livings, not so numerous as had been asserted, but which came again and again into the market, and which, being capable of being used for ill purposes, gave rise to most of the scandals. It had been said that about a third of the livings which were in private hands had been sold again and again; but that appeared to be exaggeration. There seemed no reason to suppose that above a tenth of the livings of the Church had been systematically subjected to the action of which he had complained. There was, moreover, a quietly-working tendency to bring a great deal of patronage into the hands of unsatisfactory patrons. Clergymen had a greater temptation than anyone else to purchase livings when the sum to be paid was small and there was an expectation of better times. In parts of the country where the livings were small many had passed lately into the hands of clerical patrons. These were induced either to purchase livings because they yielded to them so high an interest, or to bring up members of their family, not necessarily fitted for the holy office, to inherit the advowson. The Bill was not intended, and could not be construed, into any ratification of the system of sale. That system must simply be accepted as a fact, and as a fact which could not be altered within any measurable period of time, but as a system, the abuses of which it was lawful and most needful to correct. Since the Bill was originally presented an alteration had been made in the 2nd clause, giving it in words its proper prohibitive force. The clause now provided that no rights of Church patronage should in consideration of money or money's worth be granted or assigned unless the person to whom such

rights were granted or assigned had a *bond fide* interest in the good of the parish, or was interested in the good of the Church. Opportunity was given for learning that which the Church had a right to be assured of, and he was sure that no honest person would ever have any difficulty in showing that he had an interest in the parish, or that he purchased with a view of the good of the place in which the church was situated, and that he had no intention of presenting unfit persons to the living. The only persons who would be prohibited from purchasing were agents, or persons who would be unable to make a declaration that they were not purchasing in consideration of money or money's worth to be received by them, or were unable to say that they had not entered into any covenant with the present incumbent that he should retire at some future time. The Bill was framed upon two principles which he fearlessly asserted their Lordships would agree with. The first of these principles was that an advowson was a sacred trust—a spiritual trust. Not a mere commercial interest in a marketable ware, but a trust in the same sense in which official appointments were trusts unsubjected to sale. What Cabinet would dream of vending, say, Colonial Governorships? He was very well aware that the word "trust" had two meanings, and of course he did not mean that it was a legal trust; but an advowson had never ceased to be a trust according to the definitions of the past. The most popular treatises and the best authors—as Phillimore, Gibson's *Codex*, and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*—regarded advowsons as a sacred trust. They were described as "trusts for the benefit of the souls of men." He need not add more than to remind their Lordships of the words with which the Prime Minister concluded his speech last Session, when he said that private rights must be recognized, yet must not be allowed to control the more serious aspect of a right foundation of a sacred trust for the benefit of the Church. It had been urged by a great authority (the Earl of Selborne), at the last introduction of this Bill, that the Council proposed in it should have more of an elective character. That had been worked out with care by the Select Committee, and with that new element fully provided for it

now came forward. The Council should have real power, in order to inspire confidence in the Church. The Council was made capable, if funds or livings were put at its disposal, of becoming itself a patron. It remained to be seen whether it would become so to a large extent. He did not believe it would. But it would, which was more important, put a stop to the scandals connected with floating livings. The check to scandals was proposed to be given by defining the Bishop's power to refuse, and the grounds on which he might refuse, an unfit person. The Bishop's capability of inquiry ought to be strengthened by a kind of council or jury of an equal number of clerical and lay members, whose function it would be to make real the power of inquiry which now, to some extent, existed. The second principle he submitted as fearlessly to their Lordships. It was this—that the trust in question is a trust which so vitally affects a parish, on each exercise of it, for a generation, or, at the least, many years, that the parish ought, before the appointment is made, to be enabled to state to the Bishop any knowledge it possessed of such objections as a Bishop would find it proper to refuse upon. The parish was brought in as witness upon certain points. Many patrons would welcome this opportunity of being able to introduce, in a proper, formal manner, the name of the person they intended to appoint, and to be able to receive objections of a limited and special kind, based on knowledge. If this were adopted, they would, he was certain, avoid much of the feeling which sometimes arose. Had it not been for a lack of such knowledge, he himself would never have made a certain appointment to a living in his own gift to an improper person—the thought of which was a daily distress to him—if he had only let the name been known beforehand. It was recommended to him in the highest way. He did his best, and his informants placed the information they had at his disposal. But if the name had been affixed to the church door he would have been delivered from the misfortune, and the parish would have been delivered from an unsuitable rector. The Bill was intended to carry out these two principles—that the advowson was a trust the exercise of which should always be, as

in most cases it was, no matter of money, and that the persons affected by the discharge of the trust ought to be able to make definite objections beforehand, based upon knowledge. Other points, formerly dwelt upon at length, could be discussed in Committee. The evils, then, to be corrected were gross, although often exaggerated, and they were quite capable of being healed. The proposed remedies had been examined and re-examined by most competent persons, and it was believed to be capable of effecting what was required, and, what was equally important, of effecting no more. He, therefore, laid the Bill before their Lordships in the hope that they would allow it to be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.)

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in rising to move the rejection of the Bill, said, he thought that at that hour (7 o'clock), and in the very thin state of the House, some of their Lordships might prefer to adjourn the discussion of so important a Bill, which required much more explanation than it had received in that House. It could hardly be said to have been discussed in the conversational speeches that were made last year, and no attempt had been made to show that the Bill would cure the evils against which it was said to be directed. Moreover, no importance could be attached to the friendly discussion it had received in a Committee containing five Bishops and the noble and learned Earl opposite (the Earl of Selborne) who had spoken in favour of the Bill. Such a Bill could not be properly discussed, except with a hostile witness, with an eye for defects. It was not only a most important Bill, but he did not think anyone would dispute that the measure was by far the most revolutionary that had ever been introduced in reference to the Church since the Long Parliament. There was no substantial discussion on the Bill last year; and, in point of fact, its real objects and defects had never yet been stated in the House, for it did not arrive at a third reading when it was introduced before. It was nothing to say that Diocesan Councils had recognized it as an excellent Bill. He believed they had not attempted to discuss its operation thoroughly. Equally superficial was the attention it had received from

the religious newspapers. The only elaborate article in a magazine, by Chancellor Espin, was adverse to the Bill. The approval of the House of Laymen did not amount to much, for it was a voluntary body; at all events he, a layman who was known to take an interest in Church affairs, did not know how it was elected, and had never had the opportunity of giving a vote for a member of it. In fact, a Dean had described the House of Laymen to him as "the Chatterbox." It was, therefore, correct that all the indications he could find of any notice having been taken of the Bill did not justify the assumption that its provisions had been appreciated. If they were to accept the most noble Prelate's account of the Bill, it was enough to say that there were evils to be cured; but he had been benevolent enough to add that those evils were exceptional, and that it was quite an exaggeration to suppose that they were common. So that because there were a few bad things, and because one-twelfth, according to the most rev. Prelate's estimate, of the livings were sometimes sold, therefore they were practically to pass a Bill which would abolish private patronage in England altogether. The Dean whom he had just quoted once told him that private patronage was better dispensed than episcopal patronage. This was a very complicated Bill, and instead of dealing with its sections and sub-sections it was better to state cases, and see how the Bill would operate. Suppose a Bishop had a living to give away. He had to consider the possibility of the patron desiring to sell it. The Bishop might not present the best person; but he might be as good as he need be, for every living could not have the best man. There was a trust. Surely it was a trust to do some definite thing. What? To present a fit man. There was nothing new in that form of trust. The patron, who had a right to present a fit person, had possessed it for 800 years, and everyone knew that he was under condition to present a fit man. But who was to judge of the fitness? A body of people elected like the churchwardens, as they were to be in this Bill? No; the Bishops. He admitted that the Bishops not only had the duty of doing this, but he thought their power of doing it had been gradually, almost unduly, restricted, as regarded

The Archbishop of Canterbury

the interests of the Church and the Kingdom, by lawyers and Judges. Why was that? Because Judges were obliged to act by rule, and if they found that a Bishop had invented a new test for himself they were obliged to say that it was not legal. He objected to the giving a single Bishop the power of vetoing the presentation to a living. In the first instance he would give the power very largely indeed, but subject to the control of somebody else, who should not be a fixed person, but a precarious tribunal of other Bishops upon whom he could not reckon beforehand. He did not think there would be much danger to the Church, to the patrons, or to anyone else, in such a reference to episcopal discretion. He was not speaking as an opponent of the Bishops; he was more interested in them and more episcopal than they were themselves, because he wanted them to have more powers; but he did not feel prepared to trust any one Bishop to decide who was, or who was not, a fit person for a living; but now the Bishops wanted to give up their power to the worst possible Body that could be chosen. The Bill proposed that a constituent Body should be elected by the whole parish, and should be composed of persons who had made a declaration that they were members of the Church of England. He thought there were many people who would make that declaration, and yet who were not the persons which one would wish to substitute for the Bishops in this matter. How would this Body work? As soon as notice was given that a living was vacant, a separate committee would probably be constituted in every public-house in the locality—the High Church at the Bull, and the Low Church at the Bear. These committees would organize opposition to every person not on their own side; and, although it was all very well to snub a single person and put a veto on a person who wanted to enforce the law of England, it would be a much more serious matter to deal with a body of persons meeting at the Tiger or the Black Bear, or any other public-house in the locality; and it would never do to treat such opposition with contempt, for in that case a Bill would probably be introduced in "another place" to compel them to recognize it. They might make all sorts of objections. Then, again, was it a right thing to subject a

man, against whom there was no objection, to such an inquiry as was proposed. A man might be too old, too young, or too weak, mentally or physically, or might lack other qualifications which the parochial council thought a serious disadvantage, and the Bishops must consider them all. Assuming, however, that they did not exercise the power and consider the objections, and supposing that one party obtained the victory, what happened? The new vicar came into the parish with one or two of the parties dead against him. That was a very uncomfortable position for a man to occupy, and unless the Bishop meant to upset the parochial Body he must refer the matter to the new Diocesan Council. For seats on the new parochial Body, too, there would be a lively contest in the parish, and, once elected, clerical and non-clerical members, High Church and Low, would all be found voting against each other. It was before a Body so composed that the incumbent nominated was to be brought, and it was to sit in public. It had once been his (Lord Grimthorpe's) lot to sit as a Commissioner, under the Church Discipline Act, upon a drunken parson. There was a well-packed assembly in the gallery to watch the whole proceeding. A British jury would always side with a drunkard, and so this British mob cheered everything that came out in favour of the drunken parson, and received everything the other way with marks of disapprobation as near to hissing as they could. But here, under the present Bill, the most innocent man in the world was to be hauled up before a publicly constituted Body—to be tried in public, to be asked all about his debts; whether he had such and such an illness; in short, to be asked every possible question that an impudent churchwarden, or men of that class, chose to put to him. He could imagine a sensitive man saying to such a Council "Go to Jericho" before he would consent to go before them. Was such a system likely to induce good men to go into the Church? The most rev. Prelate said the present system had produced a large number of excellent rich young men. Did his Grace wish to stop rich young men from entering the Church in these days when the net annual value of livings was declining rapidly, and going down to nothing; and when it was notoriously below £250 a year on

the average, did the Church not get more out of her rich men than out of the poor ones? It was, he contended, most improper that men against whom there was no suspicion should be subjected to an ordeal of the kind he had described. And they had some little experience to go upon in this matter in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843. Well, in 30 years after that event patronage was abolished in Scotland, for they all remembered the Bill of the late Earl of Aberdeen dealing with presentations in Scotland. It did not avert the split in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; but it destroyed the value of the advowsons, as was discovered when patronage was finally abolished. The patron, indeed, got some compensation, but only one year's purchase, and that, it had been contended by men like the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) and the late Duke of Buccleuch, was too much, because the right of patronage had ceased to have any selling value at all. The same result would take place in England as in Scotland, for Bills of this kind had already reduced the value of an advowson from ten to five years' purchase, and soon they would be of no value at all. It was said, however, that the Bishops might negative the votes of his own Council, just as he might negative the vote of the parochial Council. What! A body called into existence by the Bishops themselves? He did not believe the Bishops would do that. The Bishops would be helpless; and, therefore, this was a Bill to transfer the donee from the Bishops to the churchwardens. The Bishops said that laymen had spiritual trusts, as well as the Bishops themselves. Laymen had nothing of the kind, but the Bishops had. The Bishops came down to the House and proposed, in a Bill of this kind, to throw overboard their power in favour of a Board to be elected by the lowest of the parishioners. He should like to know how the Bishops could get over that. In his opinion, these were reasons enough to give against that portion of the Bill. Then, as to that portion of the Bill which related to the mode in which patronage was to be exercised, it was said that a layman was very wicked if he gave a living to his son. But Bishops had done that themselves. It must be recollected that now-a-days

very few young men went into the Church without having a real calling for the position. The profession of a clergyman was not by any means a very desirable one. Certainly, young men did not enter that profession for what they could get out of it. If a man were rich, he was almost certain to spend more on his living than he got out of it. He, himself, knew the case of a man who had never put a single penny into his pocket out of his living for eight or nine years. This was the constant case—it was the rule, and not the exception. And yet their Lordships, on the strength of a few exceptionally bad cases, were asked to sweep away rights which had existed since the foundation of the Church of England, merely because a few jobbing agents had interposed. No one would go farther than he would to deal with those agents, and he entirely agreed with that part of the Bill which dealt with them with the view of suppressing the practice. The only way of dealing with the question of patronage in connection with the Church of England was that it should be placed in the hands, not of a Board, but of some persons who could be trusted to exercise a fitting discretion in the matter. The most rev. Prelate had said that some livings appeared to exist for the mere purpose of being sold, and that might be the case with regard to donatives, which he (Lord Grimthorpe) was quite willing should at once be put an end to; indeed, he thought they ought to have been abolished long before. It had been said that livings might be purchased like public-houses; but the fact was that it was exceedingly difficult to purchase any particular living. In his opinion the Bill was a very fanciful one, and there was no connection between its premisses and its conclusions. A very strong feeling had been exhibited against the persons known as clerical agents. One of these gentlemen, however, had held his own uncommonly well before the Commission, against the Bishop of Peterborough, who was probably the cleverest cross-examiner we had. It had been said that it was illegal to buy a living with the understanding that it was shortly to become vacant; but that was not the fact, although it was undoubtedly illegal to give a bond to that effect. If the incumbent lived for five minutes after a living was bought, the transac-

tion was perfectly legal. Neither was it illegal to purchase a living, when it was known that the incumbent was about to resign the next day, or that he had been promised another living. It was not the proper way to legislate to sweep away all that was good in a system, in the hope that by so doing some of what was bad might also be swept away with it. Once take a step in the direction of substituting the people for the Bishop, and the Church of England would become subjected to the churchwarden class henceforth. Beyond that, under the present system, a great many good men were brought into the Church who would be kept out if the proposed alteration in the law were carried into effect. In his opinion, the case of the promoters of this Bill had not been proved. He had taken their Lordships through the substantial parts of the Bill. If he were asked why, as there were some parts of the measure to which he had no objection, he would not consent to read it a second time, he would say it was because the main features of the Bill were bad. The things, however, which he thought good might be embodied in two or three small Bills, to which there would be no objection. But he would impress upon their Lordships that if they passed the Bill they would make a greater revolution for good or bad in the Church of England than had been made since the Long Parliament swept the Bishops altogether out of that House. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Grimthorpe*.)

On the Motion of The Lord Bishop of LONDON, the further debate adjourned to *Thursday* next.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill for the better regulation of railway and canal traffic; and for other purposes—Was *presented* by The Lord Stanley of Preston; read 1st. (No. 32.)

House adjourned at a quarter past Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 28th February, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*

—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7); CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS, Votes 2, 4, 6, 7, 27; CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF CIVIL DEPARTMENTS, Votes 5, 9, 11, and 29; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Vote 23; CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Vote 2.

PRIVATE BILLS (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Dublin Southern District Tramways; Willesden Local Board.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Owners of Dogs' Liability* [181]; Vexatious Indictments (Amendment)* [182]; Licences (Belfast)* [183]; Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2)* [184].

Second Reading—County Courts (Expenses) [177].

Second Reading—*Referred to Select Committee*—Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) [135].

Committee—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) [1], *debate adjourned*.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

DUBLIN SOUTHERN DISTRICT TRAMWAYS BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Dillwyn*.)

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Since this Bill was postponed on Friday last I have communicated with the agents for the promoters, and also with the Corporation of Dublin. I have received a letter from the agents, in which they say—

"We are instructed and hereby undertake to withdraw from the Bill all the provisions except those relating to the return of deposit money in Clause 4."

That arrangement is satisfactory to those for whom I am concerned, and therefore I shall not offer further opposition to the Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS—STATUS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, What

will regulate the status of Army Medical Officers on board ship or for choice of quarters, their relative rank having been abolished?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I would remind my hon. and gallant Friend that relative rank was neither actual nor titular rank, but only a classification for precedence, allowances, and widows' pensions. As relative rank served no useful purpose, it has been abolished; but the classification which it represented remains and still regulates all such matters as those referred to in the Question?

INDIA—ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—EXCLUSION OF EUROPEAN ARTICLES.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Superintendent of Army Clothing, Madras, in inviting tenders for the use of the Army Clothing Department for the official year, 1888-9, made the following stipulation:—"Articles of European manufacture are not required;" and, if so, what is the reason that goods of Lancashire and Yorkshire manufacture are excluded from competition in Madras with those of "local manufacture or indigenous origin."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): It is a rule of the Indian Service that articles of European manufacture must be purchased through the Store Department of the India Office, in order that they may be properly inspected in this country. A large demand for Army clothing for Madras for 1888-9 is now being dealt with in that Department. Where it is more economical to use an article of local manufacture or indigenous origin, the purchase is effected in India. The expression referred to in the Question, which does not seem a very happy one, appears intended to give notice of this limitation of authority to purchase on the part of the Government of Madras. The attention of the Government of Madras will be called to the subject.

INTESTATES (SCOTLAND).

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he has any objection to cause to be

printed and published annually, the names, designations, and addresses of all persons who have died intestate in Scotland, and whose estates have fallen to the Crown as *ultimus haeres*?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I have no objection to giving an Annual Return, similar to that already given for England, as an Appendix to the Statement of the Crown's Nominee Account; but with such modifications in form as may be required to meet the requirements of Scottish law.

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND)—PRIVATE PROSECUTION.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether a criminal charge against a Police Inspector of Glasgow can be proceeded with at the instance of a private prosecutor, at his own cost and risk, without the concurrence of the Procurator for the public interest; and, whether such concurrence can be refused by Law?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): In Scotland it is competent for a private individual to prosecute at his own cost and risk, and that the person accused is a Police Inspector makes the case in no way different from an ordinary one; but the private party cannot do so without the concurrence of the Public Prosecutor. On the other hand, the Public Prosecutor cannot capriciously or oppressively refuse to give his concurrence. If the private party can show that the Public Prosecutor has refused to give his concurrence, either on improper grounds or from corrupt motives, the High Court of Justiciary will intervene to prevent the injustice.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET—INSANITARY CONDITION.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the insanitary and inadequate nature of the accommodation provided for the staff of the Post Office Savings Bank Department at 147, Queen Victoria Street; whether the gross cubic space of one room, in which 40 *employés* have to work, allows less than 360 cubic feet of air per head, and the rooms are dark, ill-ventilated, and disturbed by the

noise and vibration of adjacent machinery; and, whether, in view of the fact that these conditions are unquestionably detrimental to health, and that several years must necessarily elapse before a new building can be erected on the site which has been purchased under the sanction of Parliament, he will at once take steps to provide suitable accommodation in some other building or buildings?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have personally inspected the premises, No. 147, Queen Victoria Street. They have been taken for a temporary purpose only, and were the best that could be obtained, it being necessary to have the accommodation as near as possible to the main Savings Bank Office. The premises are not all that could be desired; but I do not think they can be considered as very objectionable for a mere temporary purpose. I will, however, make inquiry whether improvement can be effected in the ventilation. Attention is also being given to the question of obtaining additional temporary accommodation to meet increase of business, and of thus relieving any inconvenience which may exist at present.

VACCINATION ACTS—KEIGHLEY, &c.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether in the towns of Keighley, Bingley, and Leicester, where there exist large unvaccinated populations (the Vaccination Acts being practically a dead letter) there have been more or fewer cases of small-pox during the past 10 years than in other towns where the Vaccination Acts are generally complied with?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have communicated with the Registrar General, and am informed that, practically, there has been no epidemic of small-pox worth mentioning in any of the 19 great Provincial towns dealt with in the Registrar General's Reports in the last 10 years. Only one small-pox death was registered in that period in Leicester itself; but 10 more were registered in the Leicester Borough Hospital, outside the town. This gives an annual rate of nine in 1,000,000 living; a rate, however, which, small as it is, was nevertheless higher than the rates at Ports-

mouth, Norwich, Plymouth, Bristol, and Bradford. Neither Keighley nor Bingley are towns for which separate statistics are published by the Registrar General. Both, however, are situated in the Registration District of Keighley, and have a population equal to about three-fourths of that of the whole district. The last calculated rate for this district is for the 10 years 1871-80, as given in the last Decennial Supplement. The annual rate in the district in that decennium was 270 per 1,000,000 living; and higher than in 25 out of the 32 remaining districts in the West Riding; higher also than in any of the following great towns, out of the 20 dealt with in the Registrar General's Reports:—Hull, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Oldham, Bradford, and Brighton.

ARMY—REPORTED REDUCTION OF HORSE ARTILLERY.

GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in view of batteries of Horse Artillery being so difficult to construct, so impossible to improvise, and in the interests of the efficiency of Cavalry in the field, the Government will postpone the proposed abolition of five batteries of Horse Artillery, out of a Home strength of 13, until this House shall have had an opportunity of discussing the whole question?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): I am afraid that to give any such undertaking as that asked for by my hon. and gallant Friend would be to transfer to the House of Commons a responsibility which must be borne by myself. But, as the Army Estimates will be brought forward in a very few days, my hon. and gallant Friend will have full opportunity of raising this question at a time when he has before him all the reasons for this conversion.

POST OFFICE—CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE—PROMOTION.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the system of promotion in the Central Telegraph Office is according to salary; and, whether that system places London clerks at a disadvantage, as compared with Provincial clerks, so that Provincial clerks junior in date of appointment are promoted to London vacancies over

the heads of London clerks senior in date of appointment; and, if so, whether he will consider the possibility of placing London and Provincial clerks on a footing of equality as regards promotion?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I am not quite sure that I understand the Question; but if the hon. Member will call at the General Post Office, I will take care that he shall receive the fullest information.

IRELAND — LETTER OF THE ARCH-BISHOP OF CASHEL.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a letter signed "T. W. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel," addressed to *The Freeman's Journal*, from "The Palace, Thurles," on the 17th February, in which it is said—

"Had a Manifesto against paying taxes been issued at the time (of the No Rent Manifesto), I should certainly have supported it on principle. I am precisely in the same frame of mind just now. Our line of action as a people appears to me to be in this respect both suicidal and inconsistent. We pay taxes to a Government that uses them not for the public good and in accordance with the declared wishes of the taxpayers, but in direct opposition to them. . . . Our money goes to fee and feed a gang of needy and voracious lawyers, to purchase bludgeons for policemen to be used in smashing the skulls of our people, and generally for the support of foreign garrisons, or native slaves who hate and despise everything Irish, and every genuine Irishman;"

and, whether Her Majesty's Government intend to take any, and, if so, what, action in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Mr. Speaker, I can only say at present, in reply to my hon. Friend, that this matter is engaging the close and serious attention of the Government.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.) asked whether the assessed taxes, which were the principal direct taxes in England, were not imposed in Ireland?

[No reply.]

INDIA (MADRAS) — THE COLLECTOR OF CHINGLEPUT.

MR. TUIE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Government of Madras is now making inquiries and collecting

evidence with the view to re-open the Chingleput Case, which, five years since, created great excitement; whether a detective officer has for some months been specially employed to work up the case; whether the Collector of Chingleput, in 1882, obtained the sanction of Government to prosecute certain villagers for complaining against a magistrate; whether these villagers were sentenced to imprisonment for so complaining; whether an aged member of their number died in confinement; whether they and numerous witnesses were made to travel over the district for weeks together, with the camps of the Collector and Sub-Collector; whether, at last, the Native community throughout Southern India combined, subscribed large sums of money, and exposed the true character of the magistrate complained of; whether he then absconded, and deserted his post; whether he was subsequently brought to trial, convicted of stealing and making away with official records, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment; whether the Government then appealed against this sentence of the Mofussil Court; whether the High Court upheld the conviction; whether the Collector adopted the unusual course of bringing forward fresh evidence, and inducing Government to appeal a second time; whether the High Court refused to admit the relevancy of any of this fresh evidence, and again confirmed the conviction; whether the Collector urged on the Government the unusual course of over-ruling the adverse decisions of the Courts of Justice; whether the magistrate was released by a strained exercise of the Governor's prerogative; and, whether the Collector is now acting Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Department?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST (Chatham): The case referred to began in May, 1881. Certain ryots of the Chingleput District charged the Tasildar, who is a subordinate Native revenue official, with extortion. A variety of criminal proceedings took place; but as the records of trials in India are not sent to the India Office it is impossible to answer the Questions categorically. Some of the complainants appear to have been convicted of perjury, and the Tasildar himself of stealing and making away with official records. The Tasildar appealed twice to

Mr. Bradlaugh

the Madras High Court. On the first occasion the sentence was reduced from two to one year's rigorous imprisonment. The High Court had no jurisdiction to entertain a second appeal; but on May 31, 1883, the Madras Government made an Order, stating that—

“The Governor in Council, after considering the further opinions expressed by the Judges of the High Court in this peculiar case, has come to the conclusion that it will be most consistent with justice to give the accused the benefit of the doubt raised by the subsequent evidence, and he is accordingly pleased under Section 401, Code of Criminal Procedure, to remit the remainder of the sentence.”

Mr. Price, now Acting Secretary to the Madras Government, was Collector of Chingleput between 1878 and 1884. The Secretary of State is not aware of any intention on the part of the Government of Madras to re-open this case.

INDIA (MADRAS)—BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE.

MR. TUIE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the senior member of the Madras Board of Revenue was last year engaged four months making a special Report on the district administration of Madura; and what action will Government take on the Report?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Yes; the action to be taken on the Report is still under the consideration of the Governor of Madras.

FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—GREYSTONES HARBOUR.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What was the amount of the contract for the construction of Greystones Harbour; how much has been expended up to the present time; and, what is the balance in hands of the Board of Works out of the original grant and local contribution?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The amount of the grant was £10,000. The amount of the contract, exclusive of salary of clerk of the works, is £9,000. The payments made up to date are £4,617 4s. 1d., leaving in the hands of the Commissioners of Public Works available for completion £5,382 15s. 1d.

COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS—DAUNT'S ROCK, CORK HARBOUR.

MR. HOOPER (Cork Co., S.E.) (for Mr. MAURICE HEALY) (Cork) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the Correspondence between the Cork Harbour Commissioners and the Commissioners of Irish Lights, and subsequently between the Cork Harbour Commissioners and the Board of Trade, with reference to the necessity for an additional buoy for the better marking of Daunt's Rock; whether the Cork harbour-masters have reported that a second buoy is necessary north-west of the rock, not for the requirements of local trade, which approaches Cork Harbour almost entirely from the eastward, but for the protection of the general oversea trade; and that at least one-half of the oversea sailing vessels approaching Cork Harbour do so by day to the westward of the rock, this course being much more convenient in certain winds; whether a sum of about £6,500 is collected annually in light dues through the collector of Customs at Cork; whether Daunt's Rock being outside their jurisdiction, the Harbour Board are unable to apply their own funds for the purpose in question; whether the Irish Lights Commissioners have refused to erect a second buoy; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Board of Trade propose to take any steps to protect the oversea trade of the port by requiring that the suggestions of the harbour-masters shall be carried into effect?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Commissioners of Irish Lights, who are the General Lighthouse Authority in Ireland, have considered with care the representations of the Cork Harbour Commissioners in favour of an additional buoy in the vicinity of Daunt's Rock. They are of opinion that, as this second buoy would be purely for the advantage of the local trade, they would not be justified in recommending that any expense in respect of it should be borne by the Mercantile Marine Fund. The Board of Trade do not propose to interfere with this decision of the Irish Lighthouse Board, and have no power to

initiate new sea marks. Their function is to control expenditure.

FISHERY WEIRS (IRELAND) — STATE WEIRS ON THE LOWER SHANNON.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that the Board of Conservators of the Limerick District allow State weirs on the Lower Shannon to be fished for some time during the beginning of the season, without the Licence Duty, as directed by Act of Parliament, being first paid; whether any such weirs are being fished at the present time, the Licence Duty being still unpaid; whether the owners, lessees, or occupiers of such weirs are liable to heavy penalties and forfeiture of these engines for such offences; whether the owners of any such weirs, now being fished without licence, are conservators, magistrates, or both; whether he will cause a Return to be furnished, giving the names and addresses of the owners of such weirs, stating whether they are conservators or magistrates, also the names of the occupiers who may be liable for the penalties; and, if he will call the attention of the Inspectors of Fisheries to the case, and take any other steps to enforce the Law?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Inspectors of Fisheries have been communicated with, and they have written to the Board of Conservators at Limerick for the required information. There has not been time for the receipt of their reply.

BORNEO—THE LIMBANG RIVER.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any, and what, information has been received from the Consul General of Brunei, as to the forcible seizure of the Limbang River by the Rajah of Sarawak, against the formal protest of the Sultan of Brunei, the Native Chiefs, and the Brunei Malays; and, if so, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have received no official information of the seizure of the Limbang River by the

Rajah of Sarawak; but they have been informed by the North Borneo Company that news to that effect has been received. Inquiries about the report will be made by telegraph. The matters involved are complicated, and are receiving the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—BATTERSEA PARK.

MR. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton) asked the First Commissioner of Works, If the Government would exclude from the Bill for the transfer of certain Parks to the Metropolitan Board of Works, the lands adjacent to Battersea Park, which constitute a separate estate from the Park, and which are mortgaged to the Public Works Commissioners for a sum amounting with accrued interest to about £173,000?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): As the London Parks Bill stands at present, it proposes to hand over to the Metropolitan Board of Works the debt on the Battersea Park, at present amounting, with interest, to £173,000; but it also proposes to hand over to the same Body the Battersea Estate, on the security of which that money was borrowed, and which we estimate will, in a few years, produce £6,800 a-year, and we believe that would not be a bad bargain for the Metropolitan Board. But if, in Committee, it should appear to be thought better that the Government should keep the debt and the estate with it, I am authorized by the Treasury to say that we shall not resist such a change, so that, in fact, they may have it whichever way they prefer. If the latter suggestion be adopted, the financial result of the carrying of the Bill would be to hand over to the Metropolitan Board of Works, free of all debt, a property upon which has been expended, from Crown and Government grants, in respect of the acquisition of land, the construction of Westminster Bridge, and other works, sums of money amounting to a capital outlay of £500,000 in round numbers, while the annual maintenance may be taken at about £19,300 a-year, or less than 4 per cent upon the amount which has been contributed up to the present time from Imperial sources towards the cost of these Parks and other works.

LOSS OF LIFE FROM FISHING VESSELS.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that, because of the unprotected state of the decks of fishing boats, the gunwales being only a few inches in height, the estimated loss of life from these vessels by being "Washed overboard," "Struck overboard by the sail," and "Missing while alone on the deck," amounts to 50 per cent of the total loss from all causes; whether the Government intend to provide that owners of boats who neglect to provide guard-rails, and other life-saving apparatus, shall be made liable under the Employers' Liability Acts, or otherwise; and, whether this subject has been investigated by the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The loss of life from fishing vessels has, I am glad to say, fallen off very materially during the last few years. It is true that of the lives recently lost from fishing vessels about 50 per cent have been lost from falling, being washed, or knocked overboard. I cannot yet say what steps may be taken under the Employers' Liability Act, or otherwise, in the matter. The subject of the Employers' Liability Act has been brought to the notice of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea; but until the Report of the Royal Commission is received I am unable to say what action will be taken.

CHARITY COMMISSION—SCHEME FOR CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, What course the Education Department intends to adopt with reference to the scheme for the administration of Christ's Hospital, which was submitted to the Committee of Council by the Charity Commissioners in March 1886?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The course to be adopted in reference to this scheme is now under consideration.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SPEECH OF MAJOR GEORGE JOHNSTON, J.P., AT GLENTIES, CO. DONEGAL.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a correct report is given, in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 13th December last, of a speech made by Major George Johnston, J.P., at Glenties, in the county of Donegal, on the occasion of the Plan of Campaign being adopted in that neighbourhood; and, whether the speech in question has been brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The newspaper report of the speech in question was brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor, who at once demanded an explanation. Major Johnston thereupon denied the language and action imputed to him, and the Lord Chancellor apprised him that he would closely observe his conduct in future. If any further reports should reach the Lord Chancellor he will at once investigate them.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will the right hon. Baronet have any objection to bring under the notice of the Lord Chancellor any other magistrate in Ulster who within the last year delivered speeches in violation of the ordinary Criminal Law?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Anything that happened would be brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor at the time. This matter happened in December, and what the hon. Member refers to happened, I think, in June.

NAVY — PEMBROKE DOCKYARD — DE- FECTIVE SHEERS.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is intended to replace the present obsolete and decayed sheers at Pembroke by efficient sheers capable of lifting the boilers and machinery into the *Aurora* and *Nile* now building there, and any large ships which may be built there; if not, will it be the most economical course, and consistent with safety, to launch these vessels as mere shells and tow them round to other yards in a state of utter

helplessness to be engined and completed?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The expense of replacing the sheers at Pembroke will be very considerable, and could not be effected in time to place the *Aurora's* machinery on board. The Admiralty do not feel justified in incurring the expense of new sheers solely for the *Nile's* machinery, being of opinion that it would be more advantageous and economical to tow the ship to Portsmouth. Such a removal it is considered can, under proper precautions, be made with perfect safety.

SASINES OFFICE, EDINBURGH — REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing the annual Revenue and Expenditure of the Office of Sasines, Edinburgh, from 1876-7 to 1886-7 (in continuation of the Return made in the year 1877)?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I stated on Tuesday last, in answer to the hon. Member for Central Edinburgh (Mr. McEwan), that a separate account is not kept of the amount received in fees from each branch of the General Register House; and I am, therefore, unable to give the Return of the revenue and expenditure of the Sasines Office which the hon. Gentleman asks me to furnish.

POST OFFICE—MAIL SERVICE TO THE ISLAND OF HARRIS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary for Scotland, Whether, in reply to a Memorial from the inhabitants of Harris, the Under Secretary, on 9th November last, in a letter addressed to Captain Paterson, at Tarbert, of Harris, promised—

“A service of steamers which will call at Harris and connect the Island with Oban on the one hand, and Strome Ferry *via* Portree on the other;”

whether he is aware that the Postmaster General has since declined to connect Harris by steam postal service either with Oban or Strome Ferry; and, whether he will use his influence with the Postal Authorities to procure the facilities desired by the people of Harris?

Admiral Mayne

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): In the letter referred to by the hon. Member, it was stated by my desire that arrangements were under consideration which would meet the wishes of the inhabitants of Harris in the manner indicated in the Question; but financial difficulties have, unfortunately, arisen, which I will endeavour to remove by further communication with the Treasury.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE BOXER MARTINI-HENRY CARTRIDGES.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether, with regard to the 45,000,000 Boxer Martini-Henry cartridges made yearly, the cartridge cases are manufactured entirely by the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, or whether any are made for the Government by private manufacturing firms, and if he will give the names of the firms; and, if he can state the cost per 1,000 at which they are manufactured for the Government, either by the Royal Arsenal or by a private firm?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): I am informed that the whole of the rolled-case cartridges for the Martini-Henry Rifle are manufactured in the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich, and that their cost is £3 2s. per 1,000 B.S. No. 1.

ARMY—PURCHASE OF HORSES FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to statements in the Press that Foreign Governments are largely purchasing horses for their military requirements at the various horse fairs in this country, especially in the North; and, whether Her Majesty's Government have recently purchased and are still contemplating the purchase of horses for their own military requirements in Canada and other parts of our Colonies?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): I think that my hon. and gallant Friend will find that this Question has practically been already answered. The

First Lord of the Treasury stated on Thursday last that Her Majesty's Government did not consider that necessity had arisen for restraining the exportation of horses; and I explained a few days ago our intention of purchasing horses in Canada, and the reasons for that measure.

SKYE CROFTERS—WITHDRAWAL OF POLICE.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether two detective officers are at present, and have been since the termination of the military occupation of Skye, acting as bodyguard to Sheriff Ivory in Edinburgh; and, if so, if he can state whether it is the city of Edinburgh or the county of Inverness that will have to bear the expense of thus protecting the sheriff from apprehended crofter violence?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities), in reply, said, it was not the case that two detectives were at present, and had been, acting as a bodyguard for Sheriff Ivory in Edinburgh. That made it unnecessary for him to answer the latter part of the Question.

BURIALS ACTS—BROMPTON CEMETERY.

MR. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton) asked the First Commissioner of Works, What is the acreage of Brompton Cemetery; how many burials have taken place there since its establishment in 1837; what is the yearly average at the present time; and to what extent and under what conditions are coffins allowed to be placed one above the other; whether the local health statistics show that the area immediately surrounding the cemetery is far more unhealthy than any other part of West London; and whether, considering the enormous increase in recent years of population in the neighbourhood, any limit will be fixed to the number of interments; and, does the Government derive any profit from the cemetery?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): Brompton Cemetery contains in all 38 acres and 20 perches. There now remain available for future graves 4 acres and 34 perches. Since the first burial in

Brompton Cemetery, in 1840 up to the 26th of February last, there have taken place 135,617 burials. The average number of burials in the last three years is, in round numbers, 5,000. The graves are of different depths, and the coffins are placed in the ground subject to restrictions laid down by the Home Office. I have not been able to ascertain the health statistics of the neighbourhood; but it is stated to me that the neighbourhood is not more unhealthy in consequence of the existence of the cemetery, which has sufficient open space about it. No limit can, unless by Act of Parliament, be fixed to the number of interments, except that each year there is less space available for the purpose. The Government does derive a profit, which was last year £7,070, from the cemetery. This is paid over to the Paymaster General.

MR. BAGGALLAY inquired whether there were burials in old graves?

MR. PLUNKET said, that interments took place according to bye-laws framed by the Home Office.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—PURCHASERS OF GLEBE LAND.

MR. REYNOLDS (Tyrone, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Irish Land Commission are taking proceedings in a large number of cases against glebe purchasers under the Irish Church Act for the purpose of foreclosing the mortgages held by the Commission for the instalments of purchase money; and, if so, whether he will state in how many cases such proceedings are pending?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.), in reply, said, that the Irish Land Commissioners had informed him that there were 47 cases in which such proceedings had been taken as the hon. Member referred to.

MR. REYNOLDS asked if the claims of the glebe purchasers would be considered by the Government in connection with the projected legislation on the Land Question?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH was understood to say that they would.

MAURITIUS—SIR GEORGE BOWEN.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Secretary of State for

the Colonies, Will he state the dates of Sir George Bowen's appointment and resignation of the Government of Mauritius; the actual time he was on the island during his Government; the amount of Money he received while on leave, and while administering the Government; and, will he give similar information regarding Sir George Bowen's Governorship of Hong Kong, and the amount of pension on which Sir George Bowen retires?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): It is not desirable to lay a Return upon the Table; but I will briefly give the information asked for. Sir George Bowen assumed the Government of Mauritius on the 4th of April, 1879, and received full salary (60,000 rupees per annum) from that date to the 9th of December, 1880; being in the island 20 months and six days. He was then on leave with half salary (30,000 rupees per annum) for two years. On the 9th of December, 1882, he was appointed Governor of Hong Kong; he assumed the Government on the 3rd March, 1883, and drew full pay (24,000 dols. per annum) till the 20th of December, 1885. He was granted leave on half salary (at the rate of 12,000 dols. per annum) from the 20th of December, 1885, till the 19th of June, 1887; but he will return to resume the Government of Hong Kong before the expiration of that leave. During his previous service of 29 years Sir George Bowen had had only 18 months' leave; and his leave from Mauritius and Hong Kong has been granted under strong medical certificates.

POST OFFICE—THE SUBMARINE CABLE COMPANY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he can state the amount of money paid to the Submarine Cable Company for conveying messages from England to France and from France to England last year; also, the total amount paid to the Company for Continental messages last year?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I do not think I am in a position to give a categorical answer to the hon. Member's Question; but it may interest him to know that the Post Office received during the year 1886 on account of Anglo-

French messages the sum of £37,906; and that the total earnings of the Post Office under the joint purse arrangements with the Submarine Telegraph Company were for the same year £132,223.

ARMY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT)—MANUFACTURE OF STEEL AT WOOLWICH.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the Secretary of State for War, If he can state the total amount of steel produced in the Government Factories at Woolwich in the years 1884, 1885, and 1886 respectively; and, what has been the heaviest weight of any single casting in each of those years?

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, that, before his right hon. Friend answered that Question, he should like to ask him whether the undertaking he gave the other day as to the Government employment of the steel trade applied to large ingots only, or to all the gun forgings required by the War Department?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The steel produced at Woolwich during the last three years has been as follows:—In 1883-4, 1,564 tons; in 1884-5, 1,698 tons; in 1885-6, 2,279 tons. The heaviest single casting in each of the first two years was about 19 tons, and in the last year about 12 tons. In reply to the second Question, I have to state that my answer applied to forgings of all sizes; and I propose, subject to unforeseen contingencies, during the coming financial year to give to the trade nearly three-fourths of all the gun forgings which may be required.

ARMY—THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—THE RAGLAN BARRACKS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the fact, as stated in *The Western Daily Mercury* of the 24th instant, that at the Raglan Barracks—

“an officer addressed his company in compliance with his orders, and told them frankly that he did not intend himself to give to the Imperial Institute scheme, and that they need not subscribe, if they were indisposed to do so,” and that “there was not a single favourable response;”

whether the officers of the Army generally have received orders to canvass

their men; whether such orders directed them to inform their men that

“they need not subscribe if they were indisposed to do so;”

and, in how many cases, where such liberty of choice has been afforded, a favourable response has been returned?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The officers of the Army have not received orders to canvass their men for subscriptions to the Imperial Institute. As to the other Questions of the hon. Member, I have no information.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he could obtain such information?

MR. E. STANHOPE said, it was not his business to ask whether officers or the Army subscribed to that or any other object.

LAW OF EVIDENCE—EVIDENCE OF ACCUSED PERSONS.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether the Government propose to bring in, during this Session, a Bill enabling persons accused of crimes to give evidence in their own behalf?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): The hon. and learned Member is, doubtless, aware that a Bill dealing with the matter referred to in the Question was introduced on Thursday last in the House of Lords by Lord Bramwell, and received the support of the Lord Chancellor. Her Majesty's Government hope that the Bill in question may be carried through both Houses and become law during the present Session. I wish to add that Her Majesty's Government had prepared a Bill dealing with the matter.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Did I understand the hon. and learned Gentleman to say that it is intended that this Bill shall apply to Ireland? Because, if so, I shall oppose it in the strongest manner?

[No reply.]

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE GRANGEGEITH LETTER CARRIER.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Is he aware that the people in the district of Grangegeith have been, and still are, paying out of their private purse the wages of

a letter carrier and the rent of a post office in their district for over eight months; will he try and hasten the inquiry so long promised by him; and, will he also say when the inquiry will be made into this matter, which is in itself a great grievance and hardship to the people of this particular district?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The facts are, I believe, accurately stated by the hon. Member. I can assure him that I shall carry out my promise to institute an inquiry into them, and I shall lose no time in communicating to him the result; but for obvious reasons it would not be desirable to announce in advance the time at which the inquiry will be made.

LUNACY LAWS—ALLEGED DETENTION OF A FEMALE.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, The result of the inquiries promised into the confinement in a lunatic asylum for seven years of a female, alleged to be of sound mind, and whose case was recently under the notice of the Board of Guardians of Paddington Union?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer the Question. I have made inquiry, and have ascertained that the woman referred to in the Question was not an inmate of a county asylum, but of the asylum at Darenth, belonging to the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. The President of the Local Government Board has accordingly taken up the matter, and is making inquiries as to the case.

POST OFFICE—POSTAGE RATES FOR INDIA.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in view of the fact that, as lately stated by him, the price of postage of letters to India and China is only charged at the rate of 1½d. per half ounce to the Governments of France, Belgium, and Germany, whilst the price to British merchants is as high as 5d. per half ounce; any steps are being, or will be, taken to abolish this anomaly, and to reduce

the rate to India and China to 2½*d.* per half ounce?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The low sea rate charged to foreign countries for letters carried by British Mail Packets to India and China is fixed by the Postal Union Convention; and, as a matter of reciprocity, this country has the right to send letters, on equal terms, to parts beyond sea by foreign steamers so far as they are available. The hon. Member is, perhaps, not aware that the sea conveyance is only part of the cost incurred by this country in sending letters to India and China. There is besides a foreign transit rate for the accelerated train service through France and Italy, amounting to another 1½*d.* per half ounce; a charge which is not incurred by either France or Italy for their own letters. The question of reducing the British postage from 5*d.* to 2½*d.* is one for the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

EVICTIIONS (IRELAND)—EVICTIIONS IN LEITRIM.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention had been called to a report in the *London Standard*, of Friday, 25th February, in which is set forth a record of the proceedings of Mr. Smith, R.M., and the police under his charge, in connection with the carrying out evictions on the property of Mr. Montgomery, of Dowra, County Leitrim; whether Mr. Smith directed the police to charge with their bâtons the crowd gathered together to witness the proceedings; whether, subsequently, Mr. Smith gave orders for the police to load their rifles with buckshot, and ordered them to fire, when a number of people fell wounded; how many persons are seriously injured; whether any deaths are likely to result from injuries inflicted by the police; and, whether the Government will take steps to ensure the fullest inquiry into the whole of the proceedings?

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he can state under what circumstances Mr. Smith, R.M., ordered an escort of police under his command to fire upon a crowd at Dowra, County Leitrim, on Thursday last; what was the injury

caused by the firing; and, if any loss of life ensued?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I have obtained a full Report on this subject, and I would ask the House to allow me to quote from it at some length, as it shows the difficulties under which the police have to act on these occasions, and what is really meant by what the hon. Member (Mr. Conway) called "crowds gathered to witness the proceedings." The Sub-Sheriff of Leitrim proceeded last week, in the discharge of his duty, to carry out a small number of evictions in the neighbourhood of Dowra. Notwithstanding the fact that he was accompanied by a protecting force of 100 police, he was met by obstruction so violent and obstinate that the work occupied two days, the police on the second day being on duty for 13 hours. The mobs were composed mainly of strangers gathered in from other districts. The stone-throwing was excessively violent—so much so that the majority of the 100 police on duty, officers and men, were wounded more or less severely. One constable was rendered insensible for some time. On the first day there was no firing. The mob was charged by a party of bâton men. No woman or child was bâtoned. After this the crowds, though they continued stone-throwing, kept at a distance. On the second day the violent resistance was renewed, and it was greatly facilitated by the nature of the ground. After traversing a road which had been found blocked by loose stone walls and bushes, the Sheriff had to pass through a narrow defile, flanked by steep hills. The hills were occupied by parties of men, who flung volleys of stones, and hurled down large boulders, which were dashed with great force across the road. These people had to be dislodged before the Sheriff could be conducted through the defile; and this was done with difficulty, after the Riot Act had been read, but not until one round of buckshot had been fired. Later on, in order to reach one of the houses, the Sheriff and his party had to ascend a very steep hill, when they were so violently assailed by the mob that it was found impossible to proceed until after 12 shots had been fired by the police. The crowds then moved off and commenced to re-construct the barricades on

the road by which it was thought the police would return. The order to fire was only given as a last resort. Without it the execution of the writs must have been abandoned. It is not easy to get accurate information as to the result of the firing; but it is believed by the police that two persons were wounded, one badly. If any statement on this subject calling for inquiry is brought under my notice, inquiry shall be made. But at present I prefer to believe the Report from which I have quoted to newspaper gossip; and, judging from that, it is my opinion that the officers and men employed on this service did their duty well.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the right hon. gentleman to state whether, according to the medical evidence, the police were really injured, or whether it was only bogus?

[No reply.]

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE asked if the right hon. Gentleman had taken steps to ascertain how many persons had been injured, and killed, and wounded?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH said, he had already answered that, so far as the police had been able to ascertain, two persons had been wounded.

NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—THE FISHERY QUESTION.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention had been drawn to the following cablegram:—

“New York, Feb. 24.—A Convention of smack-owners and others connected with the fishing interest has met at Gloucester, Massachusetts, and adopted Resolutions in favour of retaliatory measures against Canada.”—Reuter; and, whether any measures are being taken by the Government to reconcile the differences existing between the United States of America and Great Britain on this Fishery Question?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): I am aware of the paragraph quoted by the hon. Member, and of other news showing the strong feeling entertained in the United States in regard to the Canadian Fishery Question. Her Majesty's Government are giving to the subject the earnest attention which the importance of the matter requires.

ADMIRALTY—COALING STATIONS—THE SEYCHELLES.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been drawn to the present unsatisfactory arrangements for coaling British ships of war in the Seychelles; whether this was pointed out by the late General Gordon in his Report upon the defences of the Seychelles; whether the agent for the Messageries Maritimes is also Consular Agent for France; whether, as agent to the Messageries, he commands nearly a monopoly of the coaling wharves; whether, in consequence of the decision of the Directors of the Messageries to make the Seychelles their *tête de ligne* in these waters on the Australian route, the agent has applied that the space between the coal island and that on the main pier should be filled in and let to the Messageries Maritimes; and, what measures the Admiralty intend taking to prevent a coaling monopoly in those islands being formed under foreign guidance and control?

THE FIRST LORD (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): My attention has not been specially drawn to the point referred to in this Question, but inquiries will be made into the subject. General Gordon's Report being confidential, I am not at liberty to refer to it. The Consular Agent for France is also agent for the Messageries Maritimes, and as the only coal importer he has practically a monopoly. This application should be made to the Colonial Office or to the Local Authorities, as we have no information on the subject. Pending an inquiry into the subject, I am unable to say what steps it may be proposed to take in the matter.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—SAMUEL DOWNING—CO. KERRY.

MR. SHEEHAN (Kerry, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at Kilgarvan, County Kerry, on the 9th instant, a poor man named Samuel Downing was fired at by a Captain Taylor and his son, and brutally beaten by Captain Taylor with his gun, who left him (Downing) insensible on the road; whether the authorities have taken any steps for the arrest of Taylor and his son; whether the presiding magistrate at Kilgarvan Petty

Sessions Court, on 15th instant, refused to grant informations; and, whether a magistrate of the county (in Kenmare) refused to grant Downing informations or a warrant for their (Taylors') arrest, although a gentleman well-known to the magistrate said he would make an affidavit that Taylor absconded?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The circumstances, which are not accurately described in the Question, are about to form the subject of judicial investigation, as the police have received instructions to prosecute Captain Taylor for assault in the event of Downing failing to proceed himself. I cannot, therefore, make any detailed statement on the subject at present.

AFRICA (EAST)—PORTUGAL—THE ZANZIBAR COAST.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to a telegram from Mr. H. M. Stanley, dated Zanzibar, 24th February, published in *The Times* of Friday, in which it is alleged that Portugal has seized upon a portion of the Zanzibar Coast, which a Commission had recently adjudicated to Seyyid Bargash in return for the surrender of important rights in the interior to England and Germany; that a steamer belonging to the Sultan had been seized and converted into a Portuguese transport; and that the Bombay Mail, carried by the Sultan's steamer *Malacca*, was detained, the Captain fearing capture by a Portuguese cruiser; and whether he can give the House any information on the matter; whether it is true, as stated, that Portuguese subjects at Zanzibar have been taken under the protection of Germany; and, whether any steps have been taken for the protection of British subjects and interests?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): It is true that the Portuguese Government have seized upon a portion of the African Coast held since 1854 by the Sultans of Muscat and Zanzibar. It is not quite correct to say that a Commission had recently adjudicated that territory to His Highness. A Commission consisting of Representatives of England, France, and Germany, found that the territory in question was

held by the Sultan and reported accordingly; but this declaration was not in return for the surrender of rights in the interior. A steamer belonging to the Sultan has been seized by them and converted into a Portuguese transport. The Portuguese Government have sent orders to their naval commander not to interfere with any Zanzibar vessels except those carrying arms or munitions to Tungi. It is, therefore, understood that the mail steamer will not be interfered with. It is true that Portuguese subjects at Zanzibar have been taken under the protection of Germany. British subjects and interests are protected by Her Majesty's Consul, and by Her Majesty's ships on the Station, but trade is inevitably impeded by the state of affairs. Her Majesty's Government, in conjunction with that of Germany, are taking steps at Lisbon and Zanzibar which they hope will lead to an amicable solution of the difficulty.

STATE OF IRELAND—PROHIBITION OF MEETING AT COOLGREANY.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government question the legality of the purpose announced in the placard convening the Coolgreany meeting; whether he can cite any judicial decision establishing the right of the Lord Lieutenant, at common law, to prohibit the holding of such a meeting; and, if not, whether he can say upon what authority it is contended that the Lord Lieutenant possesses such a power; whether the attendance of Sir Thomas Esmonde at a public meeting on the day appointed for the Coolgreany meeting was the sole cause of his removal from the office of High Sheriff of Waterford; when the Lords Justices who superseded Sir Thomas Esmonde were sworn into office; when they inquired into the case of Sir Thomas Esmonde; when the order for his supercession was made and issued; when the order for the appointment of his successor was made and issued; when and where Colonel Hillier was sworn into office; and, whether any communication was made to Sir Thomas Esmonde inviting him to explain the circumstances which led to his supercession?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.):

The Coolgreany meeting was not proclaimed on account of anything in the placard convening the meeting, but on account of what the Government had good reason to believe was the object and would be the effect of it, and what took place in the attempt to hold it put that beyond doubt. Judges have repeatedly laid down that an unlawful assembly may be dispersed by the conservators of the public peace, and Proclamations have frequently been issued by successive Lord Lieutenants warning persons against attending such meetings and of the consequences of their doing so. The Lords Justices removed Sir Thomas Esmonde for the reasons stated in their letter, which referred to previous conduct as well as to his attendance at these meetings. They were sworn into office early in the morning of the 21st instant, and inquired fully into the case as it stood in connection with the events of the preceding day. The office of High Sheriff is held "during pleasure," and can be determined at any time. When a new High Sheriff is appointed there is never any separate order for the supercession of his predecessor. The order for the appointment of Colonel Hillier was made on the 21st instant, and he was sworn into office the next day in Dublin according to law. No communication was made to Sir Thomas Esmonde beyond that which was published.

MR. SEXTON asked if the right hon. Gentleman could give any precedent for the removal of a High Sheriff by Lords Justices and not by the Lord Lieutenant, and any precedent for the supercession of a High Sheriff without previous notice or invitation to him to explain his conduct?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: It is impossible for me to give an answer without Notice.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked whether the frequent proclamations of meetings to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred were not all issued under statute—that was to say, under the Crimes Act; and whether the proclamations which had been issued by the late Liberal Government had not been issued under the provisions of the statute?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: No, Sir. Proclamations have been issued when the Crimes Act was not in force.

MR. T. M. HEALY: What were the dates?

[No reply.]

BRITISH HONDURAS.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether a Memorial has been received from British Honduras, praying that the present Governor be not again sent back to that Colony; and, what steps Her Majesty's Government intend to take in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): No such Memorial has been received.

THE INDIAN OCEAN—THE SEYCHELLES—MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD.

MR. CAREW (Kildare, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether Mr. Clifford Lloyd has left the Seychelles, and is now in this country; and, whether he still occupies the post of Governor at the Seychelles, or whether his services have been dispensed with; and, if so, on what grounds?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Mr. Clifford Lloyd never went to the Seychelles, having left Mauritius for England on sick leave before the Secretary of State's despatch appointing him to act as Chief Civil Commissioner of Seychelles reached Mauritius. He is now in this country. He has never occupied the post referred to, having remained in England on leave since his return from Mauritius. The Chief Civil Commissioner, whose place it was intended last year that he should temporarily fill, will shortly resume the duties of this office, and Mr. Lloyd's services will not be required.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked whether Mr. Clifford Lloyd had come home in connection with the removal of the late Governor of Mauritius?

SIR HENRY HOLLAND: No, Sir; he has not. He has come here on sick leave.

INLAND REVENUE—THE DOG TAX.

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Dog Tax is at present evaded in the great majority of cases; whether he will undertake to remove the existing exemption from it—

"of dogs kept solely for the purpose of tending sheep or cattle on a farm and by shepherds;"

and, whether, for the protection of the public and in the interests of the Exchequer, he will consider the advisability of increasing the Tax to 10s.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): In answer to the first part of the Question I should not say that the Dog Tax is evaded in the great majority of cases, although, doubtless, there is much evasion. I cannot undertake to comply with the request contained in the second part of the Question. With reference to the third part of the Question, I have to say that I am not prepared to advise an increase of the tax to 10s. The hon. Member also sent me private Notice of the following Question:—Whether a numbered metal-ticket should not accompany every dog licence, and owners be compelled to attach this ticket to the collars of their dogs? I am not prepared, upon such short notice, to agree to such a suggestion as this; but I may say that I think the practice which the hon. Member advocates would be very inconvenient both to owners and dogs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—THE BANKERS' ACCOUNT OF THE MACROOM BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is a fact that the Board has declined to accept or recognize the reasons set forth in an unanimous Resolution of the Macroom Board of Guardians on the 29th January for changing the accounts of the Union from the National Bank (Limited) to the Munster and Leinster Bank (Limited), and whether the Board are now prepared to sanction such a change; what were the reasons which actuated the Local Government Board in refusing to sanction the change of trusteeship; whether it is a fact that the National Bank dishonoured the cheques presented by the Union at first, when their overdraft did not exceed £1,493 1s. 5d., and, secondly, when the overdraft was diminished to £1,077 6s. 7d.; whether such action on the part of the said bank has seriously embarrassed the Union for several months, most of the officials and contractors not having been paid for

several months; whether several of the contractors have threatened to discontinue supplies; whether the Munster and Leinster Bank offered the Union accommodation to the extent of £2,000; and, whether the Local Government Board will see fit to sanction and promote the change of treasurer in the said Union?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (who replied) said: This Question only appeared on Saturday, and the required information has, therefore, not yet been received from the Clerk of the Union at Macroom.

EVICTIIONS (IRELAND)—BANBRIDGE BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a report which appeared in *The Belfast Morning News*, of the 22nd February, of a meeting of the Banbridge Board of Guardians, held on the previous day; whether a relieving officer named Beck reported to the Board that he had been served with eight notices of intended evictions on the estate of Earl Annesley, and that he had not been informed of the date on which the evictions would take place; whether several weeks often elapse between the service of notice on the relieving officer and the execution of ejectment decree by the Sheriff; and, whether the Government will require reasonable notice to be given to the relieving officer of the day appointed for carrying out these evictions, or if some other provision will be made to secure support and habitation for the tenants and their families pending their return to their homes?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I have to thank the hon. Member for having been good enough to send me a copy of the newspaper report to which he refers. I am not aware of any reason to doubt its accuracy; but the hon. Member did not give such notice of the Question as would have enabled me to confirm it by local inquiry. Assuming it to be correct, I am glad to see that the Guardians and the relieving officer appear to be fully alive to their duties and responsibilities in the event of relief being required by any evicted persons. I have no information before me to show

that a change in the law is required, or that where Boards of Guardians and their officers are acting in the discharge of their duties the objects of the statute passed for the protection and relief of the evicted poor are not attained.

DRAINAGE AND NAVIGATION—SHANNON DRAINAGE AND NAVIGATION WORKS—LECARROW HARBOUR.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Report of the Royal Commissioners, presented to Parliament on 8th February 1882, recommended that the Commissioners of Public Works of Ireland should carry on their operations on the Shannon with a view primarily to the drainage of the country; whether the Canal, under the control of the Commissioners, leading from the Harbour of Lecarrow, County Roscommon, to Lough Kee is a portion of the Shannon Drainage and Navigation Works; whether it has been allowed to be choked up with weeds and silted mud to the detriment of riparian owners and tenants; and, whether he will call the attention of the Commissioner of Public Works to the subject?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: Lord Monck's Commission recommended that the Shannon should remain under the care of the Commissioners of Public Works, who, while maintaining the navigation should regulate the depth of water, so far as might be in their power, with a view primarily to the drainage of the country. This recommendation is, and has been, most scrupulously attended to. The Lecarrow Canal was constructed by the Shannon Commissioners as a temporary measure and solely for facilitating the execution of the works, but was treated for a few years as part of the navigation. There being no traffic, it was given up 15 years ago, and is now in great part choked with weeds and silted. I have communicated with the Commissioners of Public Works and learn that, the water surface being on a level with Lough Kee, the riparian owners and tenants could not be benefited unless Lough Kee were lowered, and this could not be done, looking to the necessity of insuring the preservation of the legal navigation depth, without incurring enormous expenditure.

THE WATCH TRADE—HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES—MERCHANTIZE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether Her Majesty's Government will accept the introduction of a Clause into the Merchantize Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill exempting watch cases from the compulsory obligation of assay in the United Kingdom, as recommended by Mr. Prideaux, Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company of London, in his evidence before the Select Committee of Hall-Marking (1878-9); and, whether Her Majesty's Government will confer with the Goldsmiths' Company of London before proceeding with the Bill, especially with reference to the results to the watch-making industry to be expected from the passing of the measure in its present form?

THE SECRETARY (BARON HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The particular question raised by the hon. Member can properly be discussed when the Bill is in Committee. I may say, however, that the Board of Trade have been, and are in communication with the Goldsmiths' Company as regards the Watch Clause of the Bill; and that, as at present advised, they do not see their way to exempting watch cases from the provisions of the law as regards hall-marking.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS.

MR. WALSH (Radnorshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce at an early date a Bill for facilitating the acquisition of allotments by agricultural labourers?

THE FIRST LORD (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure of this character as soon as the state of Public Business will allow.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—SPECIAL SERVICE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is intended to hold a Special Service in Westminster Abbey on Monday the 20th of June, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the accession of

the Queen, and if he will recommend to Her Majesty to direct the Archbishops and Bishops to prepare a special form of thanksgiving and prayer for that occasion for general use throughout England and Wales, and also take steps to secure the observance of the day as a general holiday?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to a question which last week I asked the hon. Member for the Trades-
ton Division of Glasgow (Mr. Corbett) to postpone till I could consult my Colleagues, and also in answer to the present Question, I wish to state that Her Majesty has been pleased to express her pleasure to attend a Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, the 21st of June, at Westminster Abbey, and arrangements fitting for the occasion will be made. It is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to recommend that the day shall be observed as a national holiday.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask if the Government would request the hon. Gentleman to facilitate this laudable purpose by producing a prayer of his own?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—REFERENCE TO A SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the Government intend to move for a Committee to refer the Army and Navy Estimates for examination and report; what the constitution of the Committee is to be; and, whether a Select or Standing Committee?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): After the first Votes have been taken the Army and Navy Estimates will be referred to a Select Committee, which will have power to send for persons and records and to take evidence. My right hon. Friend, in introducing the Estimates of the above-mentioned Departments, will state to the House what the constitution of the Committee will be.

AMERICA (SOUTH)—VENEZUELA—SUSPENSION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true that diplomatic relations

with the Government of Venezuela have been suspended?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): It is the case that Her Majesty's Government received intelligence that diplomatic relations would be suspended between Her Majesty's Government and the Republic of Venezuela on the 21st instant. We understand that the cause of the suspension is stated to be the difference about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE).

In reply to Mr. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport):

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, It is the intention of the Government to put down the Rules of Procedure for consideration to-morrow. I am not yet in a position to offer facilities for the discussion of any other subjects, however important, and I must decline to enter into engagements which I may not be able to fulfil.

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—NOTICE OF MOTION ON GOING INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Sir, I gave you Notice of a Motion which I proposed to submit on the Motion that you leave the Chair for the purpose of enabling the House to go into Committee of Supply. I do not find my Notice on the Paper, and, therefore, I wish to know whether you have ruled it to be out of Order?

MR. SPEAKER: This being a Monday, and the first Order of the day being for the consideration of Supplementary Estimates in Committee of Supply, it will be my duty the moment the Order is read to leave the Chair, without putting the Question.

MR. SEXTON: Shall I have any other opportunity of bringing the Motion forward?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon Member will have an opportunity of moving the Resolution of which he has given Notice when the regular Estimates come on.

METROPOLIS—CHURCH PARADE OF SOCIALISTS AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the accounts of the proceedings in St. Paul's Cathedral yesterday have been brought under his notice; and, if so, whether he will give such orders to the police, as will, in future, prevent the recurrence of such disgraceful scenes?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have seen the newspaper accounts of what took place in St. Paul's yesterday. Those accounts appear to me to be considerably exaggerated. From an interview I have had to-day with one of the officers of the City Police, who are not under my jurisdiction, I have no doubt that in future they will act vigorously in order to prevent any recurrence of the disturbance.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7).

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £825, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Maintenance and Repair of Marlborough House."

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I have no desire to detain the Committee on this Vote, which is a Vote for the repairs of Marlborough House. The expenditure in the repairs of Marlborough House have, in some years, been very large indeed, and there is no good reason now for this supplementary increase; but my real desire is to secure that all the items connected with the cost of the Royal Family shall, in future, be placed under one head, so that the total may be easily and certainly known, and that the various items shall not be distributed in different parts of the Estimates,

and only discoverable with official knowledge.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I understand that this item is for the repairs of Marlborough House. Now, Marlborough House is occupied by the Prince of Wales, and I want to know why the Prince of Wales does not undertake the repairs of his own house himself?

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 209; Noes 99: Majority 110. — (Div. List, No. 28.)

(2.) £8,200, Supplementary, Houses of Parliament.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I wish to ask, whether, as a matter of fact, there are not some surpluses under other sub-heads in connection with this Vote which ought to render this expenditure unnecessary?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): As the Committee are aware, this sum is asked for in connection with the works which have been undertaken for improving the drainage of the Houses of Parliament, and the work is being carried out in accordance with the Report of a Committee which sat last year to inquire into the sanitary arrangements of the House.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Then the sum asked for is only in respect of this Vote. Before entering into the Supplementary Estimates, I think it should be incumbent on the Government to make a complete statement in regard to the whole Vote, as far as the different sub-heads are concerned. I am not objecting to this charge; but I only ask whether there may not have been savings under other heads which might be utilized in reduction of these charges?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The total cost of the drainage works is £20,675; but there has been a saving under other sub-heads from which the balance of expenditure of the current year can be met; principally in connection with works for the restoration of Westminster Hall, in regard to which there will be a saving of £7,000. £5,000 will be included in next year's Estimates, and will complete the cost of the drainage works.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I think that, in a case of this kind, the real facts ought to be laid before the Committee. The Committee votes certain sums of money to be appropriated for specific purposes. For two years in succession several thousands of pounds have been voted for the restoration of Westminster Hall; but, when something else turned up, the Government have considered themselves entitled to stay the work in Westminster Hall, and spend the money for some other object that has not been authorized by Parliament. I cannot help thinking that that is a very bad system; and, if I had not made the inquiry, the fact would not have been brought out now.

MR. PLUNKET: The hon. Member is quite right; but I did not understand what his inquiry really was. It has been considered that this is the most convenient way of dealing with the matter. The works in connection with Westminster Hall were stayed in consequence of delays in the decisions of the House of Commons on the subject; and we have applied the money to other works which it was necessary to undertake at once. Among the other works undertaken have been the construction of a corridor which forms a new approach to the Strangers' Gallery, and which has cost £1,500. We have also supplied additional lockers for the use of hon. Members. They have often been asked for, and we have now made further provision in that respect, at a cost of £460, and there have been some slight improvements in the Reporters' Gallery.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I should like to know whether the drainage is now working properly, and is likely to stave off the prospects of fever and those other disagreeable consequences we were threatened with last year. If that is so, I do not think the House of Commons will grudge the money; but, at the same time, I think this plan of voting money for one thing and doing something else with it after it has been voted, is a very unsatisfactory one.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I should like to know how many additional lockers are to be given to Members of this House?

MR. PLUNKET: We propose to supply as many as we can find space for, and the cost is estimated at £460.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: My object in asking the Question was to divide the sum voted by the number of lockers provided, in order that I might find out what the cost of each locker is.

MR. PLUNKET: I can assure the hon. Member that these lockers are very expensive, and I have had a hard struggle with the Treasury, under the pressure of the House, to obtain leave to make them. I do not think it possible to make them more economically than we are doing. As regards the Question put by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) I believe that the works are being carried out in a perfectly satisfactory manner.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): As Chairman of the Committee which has considered the subject of the drainage of the House, I may say that I believe the House will be thoroughly satisfied with the work which has been done. It has been done in a completely workmanlike manner, and in my opinion the House will not suffer as it did last year. I certainly trust the Committee will see the desirability of voting this sum. I am quite sure that it is money well spent.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): When we were considering this Vote last year, I drew the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the disadvantageous position in which Members of this House were placed as to the hearing of the House. I think I am in Order in referring to that subject now.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Gentleman will only be in Order in referring to the items under discussion now.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I understood that this Vote was the result of several Votes not set forth in the Estimate.

THE CHAIRMAN: The discussion has been upon the item included in the Vote for the drainage scheme.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co. Mid): We have now under consideration a Supplementary Estimate for new works and alterations connected with the Houses of Parliament. I can certainly say, speaking as a private Member knowing a little about sanitary arrangements, that there is an immense amount of money spent upon these buildings, and with very little effect. The state of the House

was found at the commencement of the Session to be very far from satisfactory. Upon one evening when the House was sitting a fog got into the building, which was so bad and so dense that I may legitimately refer to it as a November fog. I never saw a fog in the month of November worse than the fog which prevailed in this Chamber on the occasion to which I refer. I know that it was impossible at this end of the House to see the Speaker in the Chair, and I am afraid that the fogginess of the atmosphere may also have tended to obscure the intellect of the speakers. Therefore, I think that when we are asked to consider a Vote like this—a Supplementary Vote—and when we know the immense amount of money which has been and is being spent on the Houses of Parliament, we have a right to complain when we find matters so unsatisfactory as they have been. We ought not to ask the House to throw away the money of the taxpayers. Anybody who has ever looked into the subject—anybody who has seen proper appliances in connection with the filtration of the air and the atmosphere in other great public buildings, knows that the atmosphere can be rendered perfectly pure, and deprived of all those particles which we have here floating about us night after night. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members may laugh; but I am afraid they are not thoroughly acquainted with the subject. I will put before the House an actual case in connection with one of the largest hospitals of Paris, the “Maison de Dieu.” In that hospital the air is filtered through successive layers of cotton wool. Not long ago I was speaking with a gentleman of intelligence upon the subject, and he stated that a London fog could be thoroughly filtered in this House, and deprived of all its fogginess. What I complain of is that we are asked to come down here night after night, to take into consideration the expenditure of large sums of money without any practical result, and I am afraid that we are making ourselves a laughing-stock not merely for England, but for the world at large. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laugh. They are perfectly welcome to laugh and jeer at my observations; but I think that we ought to be here for some practical purpose, and that practical purpose, if we are to spend the Public Money, should be in return to secure

that we have some value for it. What I maintain is, that we get no value for our money. The smells in this House are so bad, that only the other night I heard 12 or 14 Members complain bitterly of the horrible state of affairs, especially in regard to the galleries leading to the tea room. There is a powerful stench still existing there, which ought to be done away with at once, and if this Vote is pressed, I for one am prepared to go into the Lobby against it. I ask the right hon. Gentleman who has the conduct of these Votes to make some statement as to what the actual state of affairs is, and what is proposed to be done. I have no desire to weary the House, and I thank it for its indulgence.

MR. PLUNKET: I can only promise the hon. Member that if he will suggest to me how the evil he complains of can be remedied, I will have the matter inquired into. So far as the drainage works are concerned, for which the Vote is now asked, all I can say is that the works have been carried out to the entire satisfaction of Members in all parts of the House. Personally, I know of no plan of filtering the air which would prevent a fog from entering the House.

MR. O’HEA (Donegal, W.): The right hon. Gentleman has stated that, according to his belief, these works are being carried on satisfactorily and with due regard to economy. I should like to know if they have been carried out by contract under specifications in due form similar to those which are made upon works of a similar nature are undertaken outside this House.

DR. TANNER: Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Plunket) that I did actually put a case in point in which the air has been filtered through successive layers of cotton wool, which are taken out and renewed every three or four days. Seeing then that what I suggest is already done elsewhere, I think the matter is one which deserves the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman.

Vote agreed to.

(3.) £9,275, Supplementary, Public Buildings, Great Britain.

MR. ARTHUR O’CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I have no wish to object to this Vote; but I should like to put the same question in regard to it,

which I put in reference to the other. I want the right hon. Gentleman to state the condition of the sub-heads of the Vote, as it is not specified or set forth in this Estimate. As far as I have been able to ascertain, by a hasty reference to the accounts for the previous year, I find that there is a similar irregularity in regard to this Vote. A large number of Works are set forth as necessary and as about to be undertaken at once, and generally there is an appropriation of money for works which are not touched at all in the financial year. No doubt the sums have been voted; but the money has been applied to other works which have never been before Parliament at all; but which have been taken in hand on the authority of the Treasury and money spent on them which has never been obtained from Parliament. In 1884-5 there was an excess in various items in that way, which amounted to £6,700; and if that were taken from the amount of £9,275 asked for now the Vote would have been reduced to £2,500. That would be the entire sum for which the Treasury would have any occasion to draw. Therefore, I ask upon this Vote, as upon the previous one, for some explanation of the real condition of the services for which the Vote is asked.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): This Vote covers a special grant for the Mint, and thus affords me an opportunity of saying a few words as to the regulations of the Mint and their effect upon the coinage.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine his remarks to the building of the Mint, not to the regulations of the Mint.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): There is one point upon which I should like to ask for information. I see that these Estimates show a considerable amount of excess. Under sub-head E there is an item of £1,400 for the extra cost of gas, and it is stated in an explanatory note at the foot that "the cost of gas was greatly under-estimated." I should like to know what system is adopted in regard to forming this calculation for the year for this purpose, because I think that an average estimate might be accurately formed every year. This is a matter in which a very large excess seems to have been incurred; and I wish to know

from my right hon. Friend what the system is that is adopted, because I do not remember an excess of this kind in such an item before.

MR. JACKSON: I believe the explanation of this excess is a very simple one. Of course, it is not difficult to estimate the cost of gas if we are to judge by the experience of different years. The simple explanation of this excess is, that the gas in some of the public buildings, owing to a fear of outrage or attack on them, has been kept alight nearly all night throughout the year, which was not the case in previous years.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I perceive that a sum of £3,000 is required for works at Dover House and buildings in Whitehall. Surely that is a very large sum to be expended in improving Dover House. There has been some discussion on previous occasions in regard to the unsatisfactory position of Dover House: Are we to understand from the right hon. Gentleman that at last, after the expenditure of this additional sum of £3,000, Dover House will be placed in a proper and satisfactory condition; and that adequate protection will in future be afforded to the Secretary for Scotland, the Lord Advocate, and the officials connected with the Scotch Department.

MR. PLUNKET: Dover House, when taken over by the Scotch Office, was found to be most defective as regards drainage, and there were constant and very loud complaints on the subject. For instance, it was found that the drain was connected with another drain in the covered way under the Treasury, which was of a very old pattern, and in a very bad state indeed. Those who have passed along that passage must have noticed the bad smells which proceeded from it. It was ultimately discovered that the Dover House drain went into it, and that it was not in working order at all. The works which have since been undertaken in connection with Dover House have been expensive, but they are intended to place that building in a proper condition both with regard to drainage and all other matters.

MR. O'HEA: There is an item in this Vote of £840 for alterations, &c., at the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it would be satisfactory to the Committee if we were

supplied with some particulars, or had some accurate information given to us in respect to the manner in which this expenditure has been incurred. I believe that for some years past no Chancellor of the Exchequer has resided at this official residence, and this is certainly a large sum of money to be voted away for alterations. It must also be remembered that this is only a Supplementary Estimate, and I should like to know what other sum has been expended for this purpose. When sums of money so large and extravagant are brought forward in the Supplementary Estimates, the Committee ought certainly to be supplied with full particulars. As a private individual, I should like to have some information as to how this expenditure has been incurred—for instance, whether the money has been actually paid away, or is only about to be spent in the ornamentation of the building.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): There is another item in this Vote—namely, a sum of £1,400 for works connected with the transfer of the Seamen's Registry to the Custom House. I should like to have an explanation of that item. It appears to me that the contractors, or persons engaged in carrying out works of this nature, who get contracts from the Treasury, are able to fix their own terms; and it would certainly seem that the system of inviting tenders by the Treasury is altogether at fault. I am told that it is only those persons whose names are down on a list who are invited to send in tenders. That may not be a corrupt system, but I think it is a mistaken one, and it is altogether unfair to the public. I think, in a matter of this kind, when public works are being carried out, that the Government should submit their contracts to the whole nation, so that all persons should have an opportunity of competing. I believe that if that were done the Estimates would be very materially reduced. The system of keeping a list, and receiving tenders from specially favoured persons only, is a system which leads to gross extravagance, and ought to be put a stop to.

MR. PLUNKET: In regard to the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I may say that when the right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary for Ireland occupied that position, he proposed to live in the house in Downing Street, which had not for some

time previously been used as an official residence; and it was, therefore, found necessary to undertake certain alterations, which alterations have been carried out. The work has been done as economically as possible; but it was not possible to include this item in the Estimates of last year. It is, therefore, necessary to insert it in the Supplementary Estimates now brought forward. In regard to the question of the transfer of the Seamen's Registry to the Custom House, I think I can also give a satisfactory explanation to the Committee of that matter. The nation has, in fact, made a very good bargain. The sum included in the Vote is £1,400; but this expenditure, by providing accommodation for the Registry in the Custom House, has given a clear profit of £98,000 to the country, by enabling it to sell the old building. In regard to the tenders sent in for Government contracts, I believe that a general competition is invariably invited, and the Government never refuse any respectable firm the liberty of tendering. When the tenders have been sent in, they are carefully gone through, and the Government almost always accept the lowest that may be submitted by a solvent firm.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I should like to have some explanation from the right hon. Gentleman as to the other sub-heads in this Vote?

MR. PLUNKET: The Vote includes the sum of £160 for the Stationery Office, and that work is complete. Then there is a sum of £3,000 for sanitary works required chiefly in connection with Dover House, and certain buildings in Whitehall. That also is complete. The other items are £1,400 for works connected with the transfer of the Seamen's Registry to the Custom House; £840 for alterations in the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; £300 for providing protection from fire for the Exchequer Chamber, Edinburgh; and £775 for improved accommodation for the Fisheries' Inspectors in connection with the Board of Trade. The whole of those works have been completed.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. I did not ask him whether the work was complete or incomplete, so far as these separate items are concerned; but what I desire to ascertain is the condition of the different sub-heads of the Vote A, B, C, D, and so on. In some

of these items Supplementary Votes are asked for, but there have been economies effected in reference to others which I think ought to be set off against them.

MR. JACKSON: I am afraid I have not got the information which my hon. Friend asks for in regard to the sub-heads mentioned in this Vote. If, however, there is any surplus, it must, of necessity, be surrendered every year.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: In theory what the hon. Gentleman says is the case; but in practice it is altogether different. The balance is not always certain, and it by no means follows because Supplementary Estimates are asked for, that the Treasury has not enough money in hand to supply all its wants. We had a notable instance of that before the Committee of Public Accounts last year, when it was found that instead of wanting £7,000, there were actually savings of £10,000 on one head and £20,000 on another.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): In reference to the item for the alterations in connection with the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I believe that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was the last Chancellor who lived in that residence. As to the item of £300 to protect the Exchequer Chamber in Edinburgh from fire, I should like to know how it is that offices in particular localities can get these sums of money spent upon them, while in other places no such provision is made at all. No one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works, that the Exchequer Chamber in Dublin has a very valuable library attached to it containing a large number of books that are priceless in value, and it would be most deplorable if anything were to happen to them. It would appear that the Exchequer Chamber in Edinburgh is able to secure a grant of public money for protection from fire; but in other parts of the Kingdom no such protection is afforded. I want to know why that is so, because I believe that in Dublin if a fire were to break out, books worth many thousands of pounds would be at the mercy of the fire brigade. I should like to have a guarantee from the Government that they will look into this matter in connection with all the Law Courts and places where books of value are deposited.

MR. PLUNKET: The explanation of this item is that it has been found necessary to provide fire-proof rooms for the valuable records now in the Exchequer Office in Edinburgh. This work was recommended to be done in the year 1882-3. So far as the Law Library in Dublin is concerned, I presume that no similar representation was made in that year to the proper authorities in Ireland. I have nothing to do with it in my Office, but I quite agree with the hon. and learned Member that it would be most deplorable if the valuable library he has mentioned were to be destroyed by fire, through carelessness, or from any other cause.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I would press upon the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury the importance of the question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) as to the manner in which these contracts are issued. As I understand, the method pursued by the Treasury is this—they have a certain number of firms on their list, and the members of those firms have an opportunity of tendering for public work. I should say, judging from the extravagant rate at which all the public works of this country are maintained, that that is a valuable monopoly to the persons who possess it. Some time ago, a gentleman came to me—a contractor—and told me that some official in the Treasury had removed his name from the list of contractors. He represented the case as a very hard one. The person of whom he complained was not the right hon. Gentleman opposite; but I think it was his Predecessor in Office, and the man stated that in consequence of having been taken off the list of contractors he was deprived of the greater part of his income. Now, there can be no doubt that the reason why this privilege was worth so much to him was that the Government work is done at a very extravagant rate, and that only a certain number of persons are allowed to compete for it. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if there is any objection whatever against opening up these public contracts to every firm who is able to compete for them? If the Government have any doubt as to the solvency of any particular firm who may tender for a contract, they could easily make inquiry, and compel the contractors to give solvent bail. I think it a most unbusinesslike proceeding to make a sort of select list of contractors, and by

that means prevent the general body of cost of gas was "greatly under-estimated?"

the public from having any opportunity of tendering. The right hon. Gentleman has already, I understand, agreed to reconsider the manner in which the public advertisements are given at the present moment to a select *coterie* of newspapers. I shall be happy if the right hon. Gentleman will be able to make a similar announcement with regard to tenders for contracts.

MR. PLUNKET: The practice where the contract exceeds £500 is to advertise for tenders, except in a few special cases — such, for instance, as the works now being carried on in connection with the Houses of Parliament for drainage and other improvements. In such cases as that the work is put up to competition among a few very well-known firms; but, as a rule, in any contract involving an expenditure of over £500 there is an advertisement inserted in the newspapers inviting competition.

MR. JACKSON: I would point out to the hon. Member that the question of advertising the tenders rests with the Treasury.

DR. TANNER: I really cannot altogether understand what is the use of repairing a house for gentlemen who never live there. We have been told that the last two Chancellors of the Exchequer have not resided at this official residence; and I understand that the present right hon. Gentleman who adorns that high and exalted position has another residence which he prefers. Therefore, I do not see the necessity of bringing on this Estimate now for doing work which is not required, and making the public pay for what is practically of no use whatever. Then, again, the last sub-head is somewhat singularly drawn up. It is an item of £1,400 for fuel and light, and then in a foot-note there are these words—"The cost of gas was greatly under-estimated." Surely when right hon. Gentlemen assume the position of Secretaries of State and Ministers of the Crown they ought to enter upon their duties in a businesslike way, and ought not to tax the country in the manner we find they are doing. Such an item as this, if submitted in connection with any public building in the City of London, would certainly not be tolerated without a protest. I ask for some clear explanation of this sub-head "fuel and light," and why the

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I think that all the items included in these sub-heads ought to undergo careful consideration. It is difficult to understand how the Departments have been so much out in their calculation of the Estimates as originally framed.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): There is an item in Sub-head E of £775 for improved accommodation for Fisheries Inspectors in connection with the Board of Trade. This item seems to me to apply to the Inspectors of Fisheries appointed under 11 & 12 *Vict.* c. 92. In my opinion such Fishery Inspectors are a wholly useless and valueless body of men; and their salaries, together with the expenses of the office, have more than devoured all the revenue derived from the fisheries. Under these circumstances, it is a matter of surprise to find that money is now asked for to provide Inspectors with improved accommodation. I trust that I may succeed in eliciting some information as to these Inspectors from the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

THE CHAIRMAN: This item refers entirely to offices in Great Britain, and not to the Irish Office.

DR. TANNER: I wish to know whether the Vote includes accommodation for the Irish Inspectors?

MR. PLUNKET: It has nothing to do with the Irish fisheries at all.

MR. O'HEA: As there are a number of Scotch Representatives, I think they ought to ask for some information in respect of the constitution of the Fishery Board in Scotland.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! There is no reference in this Vote to the Fishery Board in Scotland.

Vote agreed to.

(4.) £800, New Admiralty and War Office.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I never like to propose the reduction of a Vote unless I feel that there is a very substantial ground for it; but I think that in regard to this Vote there is ground of a most substantial kind for asking the Committee to reject it altogether. The Vote as it stood originally in the Supplementary Estimates amounted to £374. Since then there has been a further paper circulated stating that that was a

mistake, and that the sum required is £800. I do not allude to that fact, except so far as it illustrates the uncertainty of the position of the Treasury in regard to the Public Services. The ground on which I object to this Vote altogether is that a very serious irregularity has been committed by the Treasury in connection with it—an irregularity, as far as I can ascertain, which is absolutely without defence or explanation. Now, Sir, in the Vote for 1884-5 there was a surplus of £22,241, which ought to have been surrendered to the Exchequer. Of that £22,241, £17,000 were, in fact, surrendered; but £5,241 remains in the hands of the Department with the sanction of the Treasury. That is a course which is at once unusual and seriously irregular. The Treasury has no right to keep over from one financial year to another admitted balances on any one of these Votes. The surrender of this money—£5,241, which the Committee will see is very far in excess of the Supplementary sum now asked for—was promised by the Treasury in March last year. In July the Paymaster General stated that he then had sufficient cash in hand to enable him to make the surrender; and he desired instructions from the Treasury as to whether he should, in compliance with the law, pay over the amount or not. But no surrender was made or ordered by the Treasury. In September or October the Department over which the First Commissioner of Works now presides asked the Treasury what they were to do with the money; and on the 26th of October last, or up to that date, the Treasury still refused to acquiesce in the surrender of it, and said the money would be kept until it had been ascertained what amount it would be necessary to ask Parliament to vote in a Supplementary Estimate on account of the Service in the present Spring—that is to say, at the time at which we have now arrived. The Treasury—I do not know on what ground, for I do not think there is a precedent for such a proceeding—persisted in retaining in its hands this sum of £5,241. It is perfectly clear that no alteration of the balance of the Vote of 1884-5 can lawfully be appropriated, either for the service of the financial year for which these Supplementary Estimates are being taken, or for the financial year we are now about to deal with. The money has been improperly and, as

I think, illegally detained by the Treasury; and, having this sum in their hands, they now come down to the House of Commons and ask, first of all, for £374 for the new Admiralty and War Offices, and then for a sum of £800. It is quite clear that in this matter the Treasury have acted, not only in an unusual manner, but in a manner evidently irregular and illegal. Under these circumstances, I shall oppose the granting of the Vote.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to have some information in regard to this Vote of £800 for legal expenses in connection with the purchase of property under the Public Offices Site Act of 1882. What kind of legal expenses are they? I presume that the Government have their own legal officers, who are perfectly competent to transact the legal business of the country on matters of this kind. Does this sum go towards the payment of the expenses of these officers, or is it for stamps, or some other purpose? I should certainly like to have further information as to the particular character of these legal expenses we are asked to vote. I should also like to know whether, in connection with the new Admiralty and War Office, it is proposed to carry a new road from Charing Cross to the Mall, or whether that proposition has been abandoned?

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works will inform the Committee what course Her Majesty's Government intend to take in regard to the erection of new buildings. There was a plan proposed by the late Government which I should have been very sorry to see carried into effect. Since then I have heard a whisper that my right hon. Friend and the Government are about to take a new action in the matter. I should like to know whether part of the new scheme is that the existing Admiralty building should not be taken down? I think we should all regret if the portico there, the well-known work of Robert Adam, were to be destroyed. Will the right hon. Gentleman appoint a Departmental Committee to consider the matter?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. PLUNKET): In answer to the questions of the hon. Members opposite, and also of my right hon. and

learned Friend (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck), I may say that the way in which the case stands in regard to the Admiralty and War Offices is this. Last year there was a considerable amount of feeling expressed in favour of reconsidering the whole question as to whether it would be well or not to pull down the old Admiralty House, and to carry out the new plans for housing the Admiralty and the War Office under one roof. After some communications on both sides of the House, a Committee was granted by the late Government for the purpose of considering this question. But the Committee was never actually named, and, owing to the Dissolution of Parliament, it fell through. The present Government have undertaken that as soon as possible a similar Committee to that which was proposed last year by the late Government shall be appointed for the purpose of considering the subject. I have given an undertaking to the House that no further expense shall be incurred in the way of building until a final conclusion is arrived at. That is the way in which the case stands at present. The Committee will report upon it, and, if it be necessary, the House will be asked to decide upon their Report before any further steps are taken. As regards the particular item under consideration, I may mention that it has been increased from £374 to £800, in consequence of the unexpected receipt in the present financial year of a bill of costs incurred in connection with the purchase of one of the sites for the new building. It was not expected at the time the Supplementary Estimate was first framed that we should be able to enter the cost of that transaction, as the bill had been sent to be taxed. It has been returned, however, and we have had to provide for the increased sum which now appears in the Estimate. As regards the balances in the hands of the Treasury, I am afraid that I cannot give a very lucid explanation. It is rather a technical question; and I can only say, as has been explained to me, that the simple fact is that if these balances had been paid into the Exchequer it would have been necessary to vote the money again in this House. Part of the balances will be applied to the works now in hand, and whatever surplus remains will be paid into the Exchequer later on.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Really this matter is so important that I must press the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to give the House a full explanation of the circumstances under which the distinct terms of an Act of Parliament have been departed from. It is clearly illegal to appropriate for the purposes of any other financial year than that for which it has been voted any portion of a surplus which ought to be surrendered to the Exchequer. The Department in this case had a clear surplus of £22,241. They admitted their liability to the extent of £17,000, which sum they surrendered to the Exchequer; but in regard to the balance of £5,241 they distinctly refused to do so. They have refused now for the whole of the financial year. They were invited by the Paymaster General to give him permission to make the necessary surrender, and they refused their sanction. They were then asked by the Department which has the balance in hand what was to be done with it. The Department knew perfectly well that they could not in law make use of it; but the Treasury said—"We will not surrender it until the beginning of next year." We have now reached the beginning of the next year, and we now find the Treasury asking for a Supplementary Estimate of less than £1,000, while they are retaining illegally a sum five or six times as great, and which ought long ago to have been surrendered. If they are able to do that on a particular Vote without challenge in this House, then good-bye to all the check this House holds over the Expenditure of the country. The appropriation of money will become a perfect farce, and in the course of time the Treasury will claim the right to retain, without surrendering them, all the balances. If they are allowed to do that now, they will, undoubtedly, do it on many more occasions, and the whole of our paraphernalia of Committee of Supply will be mere moonshine.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): There are other objections to this Vote besides those which have been urged by my hon. Friend. I should like to know into whose pockets this sum of £800 goes! Only a few days ago—on the 23rd of February—when this Supplementary Estimate was first presented, the sum set down for this purpose was £374, and it has since been raised to

£800. So far as I understand the matter, the property which is being purchased by the Admiralty is simply the transference to the public of a certain amount of property belonging to the Crown. It is altogether a fancy thing. There can be no dispute whatever about the title; and as there are no stamps to be purchased, I should like to know into whose pockets this £800 is to go?

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Was the Estimate £374 before the bill of costs was taxed, and was the amount increased to £800 after taxation? Does the taxed bill of costs represent the entire cost to the country?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has asked a question as to the amount of surplus which, in his opinion, ought to have been surrendered to the Exchequer. The matter is somewhat complicated, and yet, at the same time, to those who have any knowledge of the subject, it is very simple. It is difficult, however, to explain. The hon. Member is perfectly right when he says that there was a surplus in the year 1885-6.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The hon. Member is mistaken; it was 1884-5.

MR. JACKSON: No; it was 1885-6, as I understand, that that surplus would, in the ordinary course of events, have been surrendered. It so happens that the Vote which was to have been taken—I believe £25,000—was put down in the Estimates of the current year for the Admiralty and War Office building. As a matter of fact, no Vote was taken, and, therefore, no expenditure can be made; and the reason for this Supplementary Vote now arises entirely from the fact that, without the sanction of Parliament, it is impossible to pay the money. The manner in which the surrender of a surplus is made, as I understand, is this. If, at the end of the financial year, there is a surplus of, say, £10,000, and for the succeeding year a Vote is taken for £12,000, then the sum of £10,000, the amount of the surplus, would be written off the £12,000, leaving only £2,000. If we had surrendered the surplus of 1885-6, we must have issued money unnecessarily from the Exchequer. I hope I have made it quite clear that there has been no desire on the part of the Treasury either to make a fresh pre-

cedent or to violate any rule that has existed. The difference between the item now under consideration and the sum of £374 originally asked for I have already explained, and I hope the Committee will agree to the Vote with the assurance I give that the surplus in hand will be surrendered at the end of the year.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The liability of the Treasury in reference to the surrender of the original surplus is perfectly clear, and they admit it themselves. They permitted the surrender of £17,000 out of £22,000, and there was no reason why they should not have sanctioned the surrender of the whole surplus. It would have been quite as easy, seeing the condition of the present year's Estimates, to surrender £22,000 as it was to surrender £17,000. Why should a distinction be drawn between the two portions of the surplus? My contention has reference to more than the mere matter of convenience. I say that what has been done is irregular and illegal. [MR. JACKSON: No.] The Comptroller General has so reported it, and he has refused to recognize the arrangement at all. According to the argument of the Secretary to the Treasury, it would appear that if this House votes a sum in any single year for such a thing as a monument to General Gordon, and the expenditure does not reach the full Vote, there being no Vote for a similar service, it would be impossible to surrender the surplus, and it would have to be hung up for the present.

MR. JACKSON: What I stated was that if it came to the knowledge of the Treasury that further works of the same character would require to be undertaken in the succeeding year, the surpluses should be retained in order to avoid an unnecessary issue from the Exchequer.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Treasury have no right to appropriate for the payment of the liabilities of one financial year sums of money which have been voted for the service of the previous year. The Treasury have taken this sum of £5,200 into their own hands, and they know they have done wrong in doing so. I believe they will find it impossible to point to another instance in which the Treasury have acted in the same manner. The whole thing is grossly irregular. Why should

the Treasury ask for a sum of £800, when they admit that they are retaining a sum of more than £5,000?

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardineshire): I hope that this Estimate will be withdrawn. The whole business appears to me to be illegal and irregular. On the year closing all moneys not used out of the year's grants are yielded up. It is well known to many Members of this House that it is contrary to law for the Treasury to retain, or to allow Departments to retain, the year's unexpended balances in their own hands. I hope that in future this system will not be continued.

MR. LOCKWOOD (York): I trust that before the Committee leaves this Vote some right hon. Gentleman opposite will take the trouble to answer the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) as to how this sum of £800 has been spent. The attention of the Government has been called to it in most unmistakable terms, and strong objections have been taken to the Vote. I know that an answer has been given from the Treasury Bench; but in that answer the objection of my hon. Friend in regard to this charge for illegal expenses was entirely passed over; and the Secretary to the Treasury devoted his reply to the objections taken by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) to the appropriation by the Treasury of certain cash balances. I think it would be well for the Committee to appreciate exactly the position of the Government with regard to this Vote. On the 23rd of February they presented an Estimate in which they asked the Committee to vote in respect of legal expenses in connection with the new Admiralty and War Offices a sum of £374. They then came up to the Committee on the 26th of February with another Estimate, in which, instead of the sum of £374, they ask the House to give them £800. They are directly challenged by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton to tell the Committee how that sum of £800 is made up, and they have been asked whether any portion of it is for stamps, or whether any part of it consists of the cost of inquiries as to title. But the right hon. Gentleman has not given us the slightest information on the subject.

What I understand my hon. Friend to want in the way of information from the right hon. Gentleman is that he should give the Committee a full detail of the original item of £374, and also of the sum of £800 we are now asked to vote. At any rate, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will condescend to give the Committee a sufficient amount of detail to enable them to form some opinion as to how an item of £374 on the 23rd of February was converted into one of £800 on the 26th.

MR. PLUNKET: I thought I had explained to the Committee already. The affair is as simple as possible. These expenses are legal expenses incurred in connection with the purchase of property in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross and Spring Gardens, and of arbitrations which have taken place in connection with that purchase. These legal expenses have not been incurred since the Supplementary Estimates were first laid on the Table. But when the Supplementary Estimates were circulated, the costs which had been incurred had not been returned by the taxing officer; but before the Estimate was brought on for discussion the return of the taxing officer did come in, and it has been thought better to submit the whole sum to the Committee.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.): I wish to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works in reference to a reconsideration of the site and plans for the new Admiralty and War Offices. I will ask him whether it is not possible to reconsider the proposed site for the Admiralty and War Offices, with a view of setting the building back very considerably from the point shown on the plans now before the House? I would also ask if it is the intention of the Government to utilize the whole of the site at Charing Cross, including Messrs. Drummond's Bank, in order to open up The Mall to Trafalgar Square? Most of our public buildings have been spoiled in consequence of there being no point from which they can be seen, because of their not being set back far enough from the street. Take St. Paul's, for instance; it is impossible to obtain anything like a view of it without going to the top of some of the houses in the neighbourhood. I hope that such a gross blunder will not be perpetrated in the year 1887.

On the other side of Charing Cross and Whitehall there is land having frontages to these streets and the Victoria Embankment which the Government have or could acquire that would add to the beauty and importance of these handsome buildings; and I think something should be done to preserve the view of the new Public Offices. I am informed, in reference to Messrs. Drummond's Bank, that a very unwise promise has been given that it will not be interfered with. Now, that appears to me to be a very shopkeeping view to take. The preservation of Drummond's Bank will destroy very nearly the whole of this magnificent building for the Admiralty and War Offices. I think it would be far better to provide some accommodation in the new building for Messrs. Drummond's if it is found impossible to get rid of them in any other way. I cannot help thinking, however, that Messrs. Drummond or any other bankers would be only too glad to take the proper value of their property if the site is required by the public. Certainly, the site ought not to be spoiled by confining it to too small a piece of land; and, therefore, I trust that some arrangement will be made to set the proposed new building back and open up The Mall to Trafalgar Square.

MR. PLUNKET: I am afraid that I cannot satisfy the hon. Member. It is not for the Government to decide the question, seeing that the whole matter has been referred to a Committee. Therefore it is not for me to say what they will or what they will not do when the question comes back from the Committee. The hon. Member is quite right in saying that the taking of Drummond's Bank is no part of the present scheme; but I cannot give the hon. Member any further explanation until the Committee shall have concluded their investigation and presented their Report.

MR. B. COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe): We now know, for the first time, what these legal expenses are. We now hear that some portion is the costs of arbitration. I think the Committee ought to be told what sums have been awarded by way of arbitration, and what amount of money we shall have to pay upon the awards which have been made against us. We are here to represent the taxpayers of the country, and we know that in the case of trans-

fers the law costs are always estimated upon a scale of value. We should like to know what the value of the property proposed to be transferred is in this case, so that we may have some knowledge of the scale of the legal costs incurred in proportion to the value of the property.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): With regard to the enormous increase of the original Estimate, I cannot conceive how it was possible to make such a mistake in the estimated cost of the transfer. Surely it ought to be possible to estimate to a nicety what the cost of a transfer is likely to be, when the value of the property is ascertained. It is complained that the Treasury have entirely failed to give the Committee information in sufficient detail in regard to the real manner in which these Votes are presented. I see, under the head of Details, that there is only an announcement that the sum of £800 is required for—

"Legal expenses in connection with the purchase of property under the Public Offices Site Act, 1882."

But for the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal happened to be acquainted with the manner in which the Treasury have acted in regard to the non-surrender of a balance in their hands, amounting to upwards of £5,000, the Committee would have been induced to vote this sum of £800 without demur. We now find the Treasury coming here with a demand for £800, for which there is only the slightest need. They have in their hands a sum of £5,241, and if they pay this sum of £800 out of it, they will still have more than £4,400 left. The Treasury, there can be no doubt, have acted illegally in regard to this balance. In March, 1886, they promised to surrender it; but they have not surrendered it yet, and there has been no proper explanation at all in regard to it. It appears to me that the Committee are asked to sanction a Vote of £800, which the Government ask for without having the slightest necessity for it. They have already a sufficient surplus in their hands if they want to enter into further expenditure. I am quite at a loss to know what they propose to do with this £5,000. We know perfectly well that in nearly every case in which the Government come down here with Supplementary Estimates they have a sufficient balance at their disposal to discharge their debts,

if they only choose to do so. The law which compels the Departments to surrender all balances, although strictly binding, is a law which is constantly violated. In this case we find that it has been violated; and the Treasury, who talk about having no money at their disposal, have really more than they want. I should like to press for a further explanation of the matter which has been referred to by the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Coleridge)—namely, an elucidation of the singular increase of this Vote by the sum of £426. Is it for the cost of conveyancing, or of stamps, or of arbitration?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): As this is a matter in which I had some concern, I may inform the hon. and learned Member for the Attercliffe Division of Sheffield that the cost of this property was estimated at £160,000, and as that sum represents a very large amount of property, I have no doubt that this item of £800 represents a part of the legal charge involved in the arbitrations. The question which has been raised by the hon. Member for East Donegal appears to me to be an extremely important one; but I hope I may be permitted to remark that it comes before the Committee in the shape of a correspondence between the Auditor General and the Treasury. It has not yet come before the Committee on Public Accounts. It is necessary that it should go before them, and I presume that it will be then thoroughly investigated. I would, therefore, suggest to the Committee that it would be as well to postpone any further discussion until we have their Report on the matter. I quite agree with the hon. Member that an important principle is involved; and if the statement of the Comptroller and Auditor General is right, there has, undoubtedly, been some indiscretion on the part of the Treasury.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The question of the surrender of the Treasury balances is a very important one, and I hope to hear more on the subject. So far as the details are concerned, we may wait for them until we get the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts. I have always understood that what sums were not spent in the financial year ought to be surrendered. That is a very important principle, and the Treasury have now set up an entirely

new principle. What I understand the Treasury to say is this—if we refuse to surrender the balances and prefer to keep them over for another year we may do so, on the understanding, however, that the money is not spent until the expenditure is sanctioned by Parliament. If that is so, it destroys altogether the principle that the balances ought to be surrendered every year. I think it is a most dangerous doctrine, and I hope I have misunderstood the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. At any rate, I trust the Committee will receive some further explanation.

MR. JACKSON: The explanation of the increased amount of the present Estimate is a very simple one. The Treasury put in an Estimate of the sum that was required for a certain purpose up to a certain date. It subsequently came to their knowledge that a further sum would be required; and they took the first opportunity, after they obtained that knowledge, of submitting a further Estimate giving the altered sum required. An hon. Member has said that there is no necessity to vote this sum now, because the Treasury have in hand a balance more than sufficient to meet it; but the Treasury have no power to pay a single shilling of money except after the sanction of Parliament to the payment has been obtained. It is, therefore, necessary to ask the Committee for this sum in order to enable the Treasury to pay it. With reference to what the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) has said, I have laid down no new doctrine at all. What I endeavoured to explain was, that the surplus of a previous year may be written off the Vote of a succeeding year. That is a simple question of book-keeping, and it merely saves the issue of the sum so written off. In regard to the principle that all surpluses must be surrendered, there is no difference of opinion upon that point at all. That practice is invariably followed, and I believe it is impossible to find a single exception.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not suppose that I do not regard the explanation of the alteration of the amount of the Vote as satisfactory. I think the explanation is ample. The hon. Gentleman says that certain bills of costs have come in since the Estimate was first drafted, and that they have been added to it; but in

regard to the other and much larger point, I must say that I failed to gather any explanation, or any excuse, for the line of conduct which the Treasury have pursued. I must draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Treasury have admitted every allegation which I brought forward, and now I will make another, and that is that in March, 1886—because this transaction relates to 1884-5, and not, as the hon. Gentleman supposes, to 1885-6—in March, 1886, the Treasury promised to surrender the sum of £5,241; but they have retained it in their possession ever since. They are retaining it now, and they are detaining it irregularly and illegally. It is perfectly true that if it had been voted in 1886-7 the unrendered balance would have been treated as a set-off by transfers, and instead of being paid actually into the Exchequer it would have been taken as a diminution of the Vote for the coming year. That is quite clear, and is in accordance with the usual practice; but when there is no Vote it is impossible to treat a surplus in that way. On several occasions money has remained unspent and unaccounted for, and at this moment the Department is in irregular and illegal possession of £5,240 with the consent of the Treasury; and, that being the case, the Government come down and ask for a further sum under this Vote. In reply to the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman above the Gangway (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), to the effect that the matter will come before the Committee on Public Accounts, and that they will deal with it, I am willing to adopt that course if the Treasury will agree to the postponement of this Vote until the Public Accounts Committee have inquired into the matter. [Mr. JACKSON: No, no!] The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury says he cannot do that, and in that case I have no other course to take but to protest against what is undoubtedly an illegality, and to divide the Committee on the Vote.

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. Member for East Donegal will, on consideration, see that we cannot agree to his proposal to postpone this Vote until the Public Accounts Committee have had before them the question which has been referred to by the hon. Member. We are now approaching the end of the

financial year, and we cannot, therefore, postpone the Vote.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Will the hon. Gentleman pay over the balance to-morrow morning?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, Sir.

Vote agreed to.

(5.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,900, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, including Rents and Furniture, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries Abroad."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I rise to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £14,400, which is the amount charged under Sub-head E. for the purchase of the freehold of the Legation House at Brussels. In times gone by there has been a very strong objection shown in this House to the purchase of houses for our Embassies abroad. That was the case with regard to the Embassy Houses at Paris and Constantinople. It was thought that these houses cost a very large sum annually, because, whenever there was a change of Ministers, the new Minister always wanted to have some alterations made, and there were demands perpetually made upon the House to carry out those alterations and re-arrangements in addition to the large sums spent in the purchase of the houses. Two years ago there were very large sums spent for the purchase of Embassy Houses at Rome and Berlin, and now we are asked to vote this sum of £14,400 for a Legation House at Brussels. We are paying at present £600 rent for the house; and therefore, on the face of it, the speculation is not a good one, because the interest upon this sum of £14,400, at 5 per cent, would be £720 per annum. There are two other objections that I have to the Vote. In the first place, I do not see why we should charge upon one year all the gross sum, instead of spreading it over a number of years and allowing other Parliaments to bear their shares of the Vote. In the next place, there is, perhaps, no necessity to have a Legation at Brussels. We know, and the Secretary of State knows, that small countries sometimes disappear from the map, and become

merged into large countries. It is possible that Belgium may continue to exist; but there is no reason why we should not cease to spend these large sums of money upon Embassies abroad. This money is voted to enable Ministers abroad to live in a certain way; to give balls and parties to fashionable people in the place and fashionable English people who go there. The houses are not wanted for the transaction of the business of the country abroad. It might be well enough to pay a gentleman £1,000 as *Chargé d’Affaires*; but here we are asked to pledge ourselves to maintain, on the present scale, the Legation at Belgium. I put aside the argument founded upon the expectation of some that Belgium will not continue to exist; but a legitimate reason why we should not pledge ourselves to this large expenditure is that we shall probably have to pay in alterations and repairs a far larger sum than £720 a-year. I think the whole system of purchasing these Legation Houses abroad is exceedingly bad. Let us by all means pay for a house that the Minister can live in; but in Brussels there is no such run upon houses that we cannot hire a house for our Representative there. There are many houses being built in Brussels; and I would myself undertake to provide the Minister with as good a house as ever he has had for £600 per annum.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,500, be granted to Her Majesty for the said House.”—(*Mr. Labouchere*.)

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (*Mr. PLUNKET*) (*Dublin University*): I do not, of course, pretend to follow the hon. Member for Northampton (*Mr. Labouchere*) into his argument with regard to his expectation that the country will in the future at one day present us with a House of Commons more sensible than the present. My view of this matter is a more simple one, and I will endeavour to satisfy the Committee that this transaction is a great saving to the country, and that it does not constitute an increase of expenditure at all. The expenditure on the old Legation House at Brussels was £720 a-year; but in 1884 the Treasury determined that they would not renew the lease, and a lease was taken of more convenient premises, at a rent of £600. In that lease, a

clause was inserted which gave the option to the Government of purchasing the building at any time within three years. It was decided in 1885, under the late Government, that the right of purchase should be exercised, and, as a matter of fact, the building has been purchased for £14,000. I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that this is an expensive arrangement. Of course, if we wanted to raise money we should not pay 5 per cent for it, but 3 per cent, which would be £420 a-year; and, therefore, I submit that there has been a saving to the country upon the amount hitherto paid of £180 a-year.

DR. CAMERON (*Glasgow, College*): I am always very suspicious of these saving arrangements. A year or two ago we were told that there was to be a large saving to the country effected by the purchase of the Embassy House at Berlin, which has not been realized. Under this Vote we have a charge of £500 for the Preliminary Expenses of Purchase of Site, &c., for the Residence of the Agent and Consul General at Cairo, of which we are told that the total will be £27,000. I should like to have some explanation from the right hon. Gentleman of that item. The right hon. Gentleman has such a winning way of placing his facts before the Committee, that I have no doubt he will be able to convince hon. Members that we are about to effect a huge economy by this outlay. The right hon. Gentleman, however, has said nothing about rates, taxes, and repairs that have to be taken into account in stating the cost of these houses. In looking over the Estimates we find that a very considerable amount has to be voted, in addition to the purchase money for repairs and other expenses. I cannot see why, if by paying rent, and keeping the principal in our own pockets, we can make anything like as good a bargain we should not do so. We have the same excuses brought forward in respect of every increase of expenditure on national property, and especially with regard to houses for our Envoys and Ministers, and the result is always the same—that we have large sums added to our annual expenditure for the details of repairs and other matters that I have mentioned. I think it is our duty to protest against every transaction of this kind, unless it can be shown that a real and substantial eco-

mony will be effected thereby. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that there will be a saving in the case of the house at Brussels of £180 a-year; but that I think is not sufficient to justify the Committee in passing the Vote.

Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I have another Amendment to propose to this Vote—that is to say, that it be reduced by the sum of £500 under Sub-head V. for the Preliminary Expenses of Purchase of Site, &c., for the Residence of the Agent and Consul General at Cairo; and I hope my hon. Friends will understand the matter sufficiently to answer “Aye” this time when the Question is put from the Chair. This £500 is one of those prolific sums which in themselves seem very small, but which lead to a much greater expenditure. It is the first step towards the payment that appears on the Estimate of the approximate cost of Site, Building, and Furniture for the Resident at Cairo—namely, £27,000. Now, I should like to know whether we have at present any property at Cairo—whether anything there belongs to us? However that may be, the same reasons which I have urged against the purchase of a house in Brussels for our Minister there apply to this proposal to spend £27,000 for a site, building, and furniture at Cairo. Why are we to pay for furniture? I have never known of any furniture being given in these cases. Whenever we have to do anything in Egypt, we always have to pay more for it than we have to pay anywhere else, and that is the case with the £27,000 we are asked to spend for the Agent and Consul General at Cairo. What does the Agent and Consul General live in now? Does he live in a hired house, or does it belong to him? He has a salary, and I presume that the rent of a house has to be paid for. Another reason against voting this money is that we ought not to spend large sums of money for the benefit of Egyptians. There are a vast number of palaces in Cairo; and surely, in common decency, considering that we are maintaining the Khedive on the Throne, he ought to lend us one of his palaces for the accommodation of our Agent and Consul General.

Dr. Cameron

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,400, be granted to Her Majesty for the said purpose.”—(*Mr. Labouchere*.)

MR. PLUNKET: I can assure the Committee that there is every desire on the part of the Government to insure economy in this matter. With regard to the site and building for the Residence of the Agent and Consul General at Cairo, I would point out that there is the greatest possible difficulty in obtaining accommodation in that city, nearly all the existing houses being badly ventilated and badly constructed. Besides that, they are below the level of the Nile, and, as a consequence, there is great difficulty in the matter of drainage. Further, the furniture existing in the house of the Agent and Consul General at Cairo was found unsuitable. A proposal was made to purchase a house in 1886; but Sir Evelyn Baring said that he could not recommend the purchase of any house, and he advised that a house should be built at a cost not exceeding £30,000. The hon. Member for Northampton (*Mr. Labouchere*) has overlooked the fact that there will be a set-off, by way of reduction, of £600 a-year, which is the allowance now made to our Agent at Cairo. I would also point out to the Committee that it is necessary to provide for the safe keeping of the archives.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (*Derby*): I think there should be a broad distinction drawn between the regular Estimates and the Supplementary Estimates. Now, if that is a proper thing to do, why is it that this Vote should not have been put into the regular Estimates, which for nearly a month have been upon the Table of the House? According to my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works, this proposal was made to the late Government. I understand that a Supplementary Estimate is one which provides for certain things which have nothing to do with the regular Estimates; and therefore it is that I ask why this Vote does not form part of the latter, which have been in the hands of hon. Members for a considerable time? And I venture to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Goschen*) whether this is not a sound principle of finance to be observed in these cases? I confess that I am against

the purchase of these houses for our Embassies abroad—I disbelieve in buying them. In my own opinion, to build a house is not an economical arrangement. My right hon. Friend thinks that by spending the sum of £27,000, which is on the Estimates for building a house for the Agent and Consul General at Cairo, we shall save £600 a-year, the amount of allowance now made to Sir Evelyn Baring. But if you built a house of your own, you might find, after a few years, that it does not suit your purpose, and that you could have been more content elsewhere than you can be in the house on which you have laid out a large sum of money. The right hon. Gentleman says that the archives must be taken care of, and therefore it is necessary to build a house for them; but I would point out that half the Governments of the world have their archives in hired houses. I greatly doubt whether, on this Estimate of £27,000, we shall have a saving as compared with the present yearly payment of £600; and I think it would have been better that we should have continued to spend the latter sum rather than build a house at the cost of this large amount of money. Under any circumstances, I contend that the charge ought not to have been brought into the Supplementary Estimates.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I think, if I expressed my own views and the views of the Treasury, they would be found to be generally in agreement with those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), as to the desirability of purchasing houses for the residences of our Ministers abroad. But there are cases and cases. The right hon. Gentleman says we ought not to have brought this Vote forward as a Supplementary Estimate. The reason why that has been done is that the question was raised in the latter part of last year. It was pointed out that Sir Evelyn Baring was living in a house which certainly no hon. Member would be content to live in. It was stated that if Sir Evelyn Baring entertained anyone at his house, he had to send the members of his family to a hotel, and it was under the strong pressure of these representations that the Treasury came to the conclusion that it was their duty to sanction the pur-

chase of a site for a house for our Representative at Cairo. It is true that it can hardly be said that the saving that will be effected will be great; and no one, I believe, would put that forward as the reason for asking for the present Vote. It is a fact that every other house that was available was found to be unsuitable; and, after great care had been taken to find a solution of the difficulty, the Treasury, as I have said, thought it necessary to sanction the purchase of a site on which to build a residence for our Agent and Consul General. On arriving at this conclusion, it became necessary to make some preliminary provision with regard to the matter; and hence it is that we ask the Committee to agree to the present Supplementary Vote. I may add that the Treasury were advised that there was no other site so suitable as that decided upon.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I was about to take the same objection to this Vote for the house of the Agent and Consul General at Cairo which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has expressed much better than I should have done. But I may point out that, by assenting to this small sum of £500, it seems to me that we shall be committing ourselves to a much greater expenditure. All I shall say besides on the present occasion is that, if the Vote is agreed to by the Committee, the Government ought not to grudge us the exercise of our right to a full and thorough discussion of the whole subject hereafter.

DR. CAMERON: We are told that the reason for the purchase of this site is to provide Sir Evelyn Baring with proper accommodation. I ask, how long will it be before this new Consulate House is erected? I point out to the Committee that it is possible that before long another Government may sit on the Treasury Bench, and that Egypt may be in a very different position hereafter with regard to this country than that in which it now stands. One argument of the Secretary to the Treasury is that the site is the only one that can be obtained, and that, if we did not make haste, we should lose it altogether. But the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) told us a few minutes before that a report came in

from the Surveyor that the site was to be had at a lower cost. [Mr. PLUNKET: No, Sir; I said it was found not to be so.] However, the right hon. Gentleman pointed out that there was no advantage to be gained by delay. But these Egyptians very often ask much more than they will take; and if they find their present demand rejected, the probability is that the proprietors will be willing to reduce it; and if the purchase is postponed, the probability is that, by the time we come to discuss the Estimates of the year, we shall reap some advantage from the delay. Therefore, if my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) thinks it his duty to divide the Committee on the Vote, I shall vote with him.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): We are asked to commit ourselves by this Vote to an expenditure of £27,000. I object to the Government taking this money for the purpose of building a house at Cairo for the Agent and Consul General. There is no doubt that a house quite large enough for that gentleman and his family could be built for a much smaller sum; and I do not see why we should be asked for a sum of money so largely in excess of the amount that is necessary. In my opinion, the sum of £27,000 is altogether excessive; and on that account, and on account of the irregular manner in which the sum has been placed upon the Estimates, I hope the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) will divide the Committee on this Vote.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I think that whenever it is known that the Government want to buy land anywhere it will be found out that many others are exceedingly anxious to obtain the site. The right hon. Gentleman will find that some months before the present Government came into Office the late Government decided that they could not approve the erection of a house for the Agent and Consul General at Cairo. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) objects to the proposed expenditure of £27,000 as being excessive; but the hon. Gentleman is, in my opinion, under a very great mistake if he thinks that it is all we shall be called upon to pay for this business. I venture to say that if the Committee votes this sum the actual cost will reach a far larger

amount. It will be much nearer £50,000. We all recollect what happened in the case of the Embassy House at Berlin. We have had Representatives in Cairo for nearly half a century, and they have been able to reside in the houses there; palaces have been available there before now, and the probability is that other palaces will be available hereafter. I do not dispute the figures of my hon. Friend, or the statements put forward; but the Committee must remember that the same statements would be forthcoming from every Embassy in the world if there were a chance of getting a new building erected. The late Government were of opinion that it was desirable to put a stop to the erection of these houses, and I hope my hon. Friend opposite will take the same view of this matter. I submit that no reason has been given for the expenditure of this money; and, as a protest against the principle involved, I shall vote with my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton.

SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.): I have been several times in Cairo, and am able to say that the house in which Sir Evelyn Baring is lodged is in a most unhealthy situation. The house is very small; there is no room for his Staff, and the place is altogether unsuitable for the purpose for which it is intended. As to finding another house, and one that would be suitable, which the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) says could easily be done in Brussels, I would point out that this cannot be done in Cairo. Everything in Cairo is done in the same meagre way, and it is almost impossible to get a large house, or anything approaching to it, in Cairo. I can testify, from my personal experience, that the site on which it is proposed that the money should be expended is certainly a most excellent one, and I do not think that the expenditure is at all extravagant in view of our peculiar position in Egypt, and the importance of maintaining the dignity of this country in Egypt.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The Government have said that Sir Evelyn Baring has not room in his house at Cairo for the accommodation of visitors. I do not consider that it is the duty of the Committee to provide

accommodation for the visitors of Sir Evelyn Baring, and it is certainly a monstrous thing that we should be asked to commit ourselves to an expenditure which will continue to swell, as all these expenditures do, without being told precisely what is to be the cost of the site, the cost of the building, and the cost of the furniture. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton intends to join us in voting against this Estimate.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I have never known a question of such importance as this raised on a Supplementary Estimate, and I think that the proceeding is most objectionable, more particularly as the late Government had decided against the purchase of a site in Cairo. I think the course adopted by the present Government in reference to this matter is totally unprecedented, and that we ought not to assent to it. The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) has given us no reason why this Vote should be inserted amongst the Supplementary Estimates rather than in the Estimates for the coming year. Again, he has not told us the cost of the site, the building, or the furniture. I have had some experience in these matters, and I am satisfied that the Estimates will be very largely exceeded, and that we shall be called upon for a very much greater sum than that which appears here. My conviction is that however desirable it may be sometimes to buy a house, yet that the building of a house is the most expensive operation that can be entered into. It has been the case at Rome and elsewhere, where large sums of money have been spent in building. A house can generally be bought at a reasonable price; but, as I have said, there is nothing more expensive than building a house for our Representatives abroad. Therefore, I appeal to the Government to postpone this Vote until the Estimates of the coming year are taken, when we shall probably have a full statement of the cost of the several items of which the Vote is composed. As far as my experience goes, it is a very unusual thing to furnish these houses, except, at all events, the State Apartments, which, in a few cases, have been furnished. I do not know a case in which the whole house has been furnished.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The amount to be paid for the site is £3,700, which is a considerable reduction on the sum originally asked. It is, in fact, a low price, and we were advised that the site would not be available unless it was secured. Sir Evelyn Baring states that another offer has been made for it, and that it is best, if it is to be secured at all, that it should be secured now. It is, therefore, necessary to take some money for preliminary expenses in these Estimates. As hon. Members are aware, the accommodation is absolutely inadequate for the requirements of the Consulate. The estimated cost of the building is £20,800; furniture, £2,500; and purchase of site, £3,700; and I would mention that a gentleman from the Office of Works was sent out for the purpose of ascertaining the cost for the purpose of the Estimates.

MR. BRADLAUGH: How much will it cost for sending that gentleman out?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: There will be no cost beyond his travelling expenses.

MR. BRADLAUGH: It is manifestly unfair to say that the total proximate cost is £27,000; to say that one item is £20,800, and refuse to tell us how much the others are.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I stated that the total £27,000 is made up of three sums—£3,700 for the purchase of the site; £2,500 for estimated cost of furniture; and the remainder for the cost of the house.

MR. BRADLAUGH: That leaves £20,800 for the building; surely that is an enormous sum, and it is only fair that the Government should have given us some information as to the details. If they cannot give them, then it is improper to put down this Vote for discussion now.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I think the right hon. Gentleman opposite has given us good grounds for voting against this charge. I should like to know whether this Estimate will cover the whole cost! The sum is very large, and I protest against such Votes as this in the present state of the country. We are not in a position to pay for luxuries. We ought at this time to study economy,

and if the Government want to know where economy can be exercised, I will give them a little information as to how they can profitably spend money on houses—that is to say, in housing the poor in the East End of London.

MR. ANDERSON (Eigin and Nairn): If I understand rightly the information given to the Committee, it is intended to enter into a contract for the purchase of the site. Then what we are doing in granting this Vote is to authorize the Treasury to enter into a private contract to buy property in Cairo which will involve us in a very large expenditure. We have to decide by “yes” or “no” the question whether this property is to be acquired; and I think we ought to be careful how we decide it, because, when the Estimates come forward, our objections will be met with the cry from the Treasury Bench—“You sanctioned our entering into this contract.” We are, virtually, now asked to sanction the spending of a large sum of money on a site and building at Cairo. The Secretary to the Treasury says that Sir Evelyn Baring has great inconvenience in entertaining his friends in his present house. I ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether this is the first instalment only of the house building programme of the Government, and whether we shall next be asked to build a house for Sir H. Drummond Wolff? I trust that either the Vote will be rejected by the Committee, or that it will be withdrawn, until we have before us the whole of the details in the proper way for consideration.

MR. JACKSON: I think it quite fair to say that if this Vote of £500 is passed the Committee will have sanctioned practically the building of the house at Cairo for Sir Evelyn Baring. I do not wish to conceal from the Committee that fact. With reference to this particular sum, the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Anderson) will know that on entering upon contracts for the purchase of land a certain preliminary expenditure is necessary; and we have included in the Estimate only such sums as, according to the best information which can be obtained, would come in course of payment during the present year. I wish the Committee to understand that by sanctioning the expenditure of this £500 they are sanctioning the building of the House; but as to the certainty of

the Estimates being exceeded, I am sure that the right hon. Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) has no foundation for making that statement, except, perhaps, his experience of what occurred when he was in Office. I may say, so far as the value of the site is concerned, that has been ascertained. With regard to the cost of furniture, I think hon. Gentlemen will agree that £2,500 is a reasonable sum. [An hon. MEMBER: £3,000.] The hon. Member who refers to it as £3,000 has in his mind the cost of the site perhaps; but the item for furniture is as I have stated—£2,500. It is for furnishing the State rooms in the house, and will, in all probability, be sufficient for the purpose. The figures are, of course, stated to be approximate; but we are given to understand that the closeness of the Estimate is such that it would be impossible to arrive nearer at the figures, unless tenders were obtained. We have taken the best means at our command; we have sent out an officer of the Board of Works to Cairo, who assures us that the estimated sum is sufficient for building the house. Having said this much, I trust the Committee will see that we have done all we can to place at the disposal of the Committee the information in our possession.

MR. LABOUCHERE: The hon. Gentleman has informed the Committee that £2,500 is to be expended in furnishing the State rooms in the house of the Consul General at Cairo. I will simply say that if the Government would give me the contract for £2,000 I should make £1,000 profit out of it.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I think the expenditure of this large sum of money in the present state of the country will be little less than a scandal. In former times the Ambassadors of this country lived in houses that were rented on lease, and we had no complaints made; but now, when we have the poor people of this country crying out for bread, we find these Estimates on the Table. I understand the whole building is estimated to cost £27,000. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) has himself given a strong argument against this Vote, by saying that the price of the site was a considerable reduction on the sum originally asked for it. I am of opinion that if we

wait a little longer we shall get the site at a still lower price. The value of ground does not seem to be rising in Egypt any more than it does in Ireland. I hope the Government will turn their eyes to the place where houses are being pulled down, houses which are not occupied by Ambassadors living in luxury, but houses belonging to men who are spinning out a miserable existence in poverty.

MR. M. J. KENNY: I rise for the purpose of asking the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) whether, in consequence of the objections taken to this Vote and the further opposition it is likely to give rise to, he will consider the propriety of postponing it and bringing it forward again in the course of the year? We have had no explanation as to how this £500 is to be expended. We are told that it is in connection with the preliminary expenses of purchase; we are told that a certain person has been sent out to examine the site; but we do not know what the travelling expenses of that individual are. All we know is, that we are committing ourselves to an enormous expenditure, the estimate of which is likely to be largely exceeded, and the interest on which at 3 per cent is £810. That item in itself shows a loss to the country of £210 a-year. I think the feeling of the Committee is greatly against this Vote, and therefore I trust the Government will consent to postponing it and placing it on the Estimates of the coming year.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I think we are spending the evening in a most satisfactory manner, because we are proving to the country that economy is asked for by hon. Gentlemen sitting on this side of the House, and that hon. Members who support the Government are altogether on the side of extravagance, and that at a time when there is want and destitution in the country. I cannot help asking, looking at this Vote and hearing the arguments of several right hon. Gentlemen in support of it; hearing that the site is to cost £3,700, and that the money ought to be forthcoming at once—I cannot help asking why the Government do not ask at once for the whole of the money? There appears to be a want of principle in connection with the whole Vote. I do not allude to the Vote for the furniture, for that is not wanted at the present

time; but if you want to purchase the site, why do you not ask for the money fearlessly and honestly? That is the course which I think ought to be pursued by right hon. Gentlemen opposite in connection with this matter. It is clear to anyone who knows the actual state of the case, and the way this Egyptian occupation is being carried out, that the way in which this money is being asked for is only an attempt on the part of the Government to get in the thin end of the wedge for the purpose of showing Europe that England is determined, under a Conservative Government, permanently to hold Egypt, and the Government know that it will be so understood outside this House. I think it will be wrong for any Member to allow this iniquitous Vote to pass unchallenged.

AN. HON. MEMBER: It appears that the question raised is not so much on account of the sum of £500 here asked for, as on account of the larger expenditure of £27,000 which is to be incurred. Therefore, I think we ought to hear from the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the Committee grant the £500 or not, if the Government is already committed to the purchase of the site, and the expenditure of the money? It would be very useful to know whether the Division about to be taken will decide whether the £27,000 is to be spent, and whether the Government have committed themselves to this scheme? I trust the Secretary to the Treasury will reply upon that point.

MR. JACKSON: I think I have already answered the inquiry of the hon. Gentleman in saying that the Committee will sanction the purchase of the site by this Vote of £500. Of this sum £100 is the estimated legal expense, £150 the Government tax on the purchase-money, and £250 is for the preliminary work.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN E. COMMERELL (Southampton): It is a sufficient answer to the argument of the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) that our buying a site in Egypt is a proof that we intend permanently to occupy Egypt to say that it does not follow because we are going to build a house in Brussels that the Government are going to occupy Belgium. But the real question is this—is it necessary for the Government to keep up

in Cairo the dignity of our Consul or not? I say that in an Eastern country the dignity of the English Ambassador must be second to none. I know that it is perfectly impossible to get a house at Cairo fit to live in, and I say that from personal knowledge, having been there frequently. I do not suppose that hon. Gentlemen really propose that our Ambassador should be the guest of the Viceroy of Egypt, who should lend him one of his palaces. I trust that hon. Gentlemen opposite will now consent to give the Government the amount asked for, on account of the preliminary expenses necessary for carrying out this important work.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 123; Noes 153: Majority 30.—(Div. List, No. 29.)

Original Question again proposed.

DR. CAMERON: This Vote is composed of three items. The first we intended to vote against, but lost the chance; the second we have not been allowed to reduce; and the third, for the purchase of a site and building for a Consulate at Samoa, is equally objectionable with the others. We shall, therefore, challenge the whole Vote.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 151; Noes 111: Majority 40.—(Div. List, No. 30).

CLASS II. — SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF CIVIL DEPARTMENTS.

(6.) £658, Supplementary, Foreign Office.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I notice that on this page reference is made to the Vote for Law Charges, Class III., Vote 1. I find there is a charge for £2,000 for Counsel to Law Officers on Foreign Office matters. But there is a further note on that page, that it is paid by fees for consultation on foreign business. If you take from the Law Charges Vote the £1,000, it will, of course, effect an apparent saving of £1,000. But I wish to know what becomes of the other business with regard to which the same counsel is consulted, and with regard to which he gets further fees. Will those fees be paid from the Foreign Office Vote or from the Law

Charges Vote? Is it intended to abolish the existing Vote and transfer the officer from one office to another? Is there a reduction of the salary of the present officer; and, if so, what compensation is to be given him for the loss which he sustains? I shall be glad if the right hon. Baronet will give the Committee some information on these points.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): This matter, Sir, was settled in the time of the late Government, who decided that the legal officer should retire, and that a new officer should be appointed at a salary of £1,000 a-year, who should give his whole time to the office. This Vote of £658 is necessary to pay the balance of his salary for the present year. I hope this explanation will be satisfactory to the hon. Member.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Are we to understand that there is a corresponding saving on Class III., Vote 1?

SIR JAMES FERGUSON: There is a permanent saving of £1,000 a-year.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is there a saving on the Vote for this year?

SIR JAMES FERGUSON: No, Sir. We do not say this year, because we have to pay the balance of the salary of the retiring officer; but in future there will be a saving of £1,000 a-year.

(7.) £10, Supplementary, Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Mr. Chairman, this appears a very simple Vote—only £10—but in reality it involves a charge of £14,000. The charge is apparently met by an appropriation to an equivalent amount of £14,340, but in reality it is no justification for the charge. It is as much a drain upon the Exchequer as if there had been a substantive Vote for a similar sum. The £14,340 is received in respect of fees and other incomes incidental to the administration of the Bankruptcy Act. The principal item on which the present increased Estimate is based is that for Country Receivers paid by fees and commissions. Now, the history of that item is remarkable. In the year 1884-5 the sum of £33,000 was reckoned upon as the sum to be paid to Country Receivers; but so far from that being necessary hardly more than two-thirds was required. £10,000, in fact, was sur-

rendered as not needed. The Estimate of the following year was £33,000 again, supplemented by a further Vote of £5,780, making £38,780, and that is about the amount which was expended, so that already you had an increase from £23,000 to £38,000 in one year. But we have now a much more remarkable increase. The £38,000 has now gone up to £45,000, with this curious result that whatever increase you may have in the fees derivable from the Bankruptcy business of the country, all is to be swallowed up in further fees paid to Country Receivers and to other officers connected with the administration of the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade. When this form of estimate was put on the Paper I objected to it as of an unsatisfactory character, but it was said that the fullest information would be given. Anyone who does not take the very greatest possible care to follow out in detail the whole system connected with the working of the Bankruptcy Act can have not the least notion of what this means. I object to the way in which the Vote is submitted to the Committee, and I trust that full and satisfactory explanation will be given of the astonishing increase under sub-head D. But what is proposed more astounding, is this. At the bottom of the page is to be found an item of £1,900 to meet additional charges for stationery under the new Bankruptcy Rules. Now that is an increase of more than 50 per cent upon the Estimate as originally presented. The first Estimate under this head was £3,700, and the Estimate for last year was similarly £3,700; but so far from this being insufficient there was a surplus of £598 last year. How is it there is an increase of more than £50 upon the present year? It is because we are told there are new Bankruptcy Rules, but I certainly cannot understand what the new Rules can be to involve an increase in stationery to this amount.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Mr. Courtney, I admit that the hon. Gentleman is thoroughly acquainted with the working of the Bankruptcy Act. He has taken great interest in it, and he has served upon the Public Accounts Committee, and devoted great attention to the accounts connected with the administration of the Bankruptcy Act. He

asks me for an explanation of the sum set aside to meet the increased scale of remuneration to Country Receivers paid by fees and commission. The simple answer to the question is that it was found that the scale of remuneration by fees was totally inadequate, and that many who thought they would be able to do all that was required of them, and earn at the same time that to which they were entitled as professional men, found that the remuneration was so bad that they preferred relinquishing their positions to holding them under such disadvantageous circumstances. If the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will turn to the Report of the Board of Trade presented to Parliament this year, he will find the increased scale which it was found necessary to substitute for the old scale; and he will find on examination that the difference of £12,000 is easily accounted for. He knows, I think, that the Country Receivers are not paid, or have not been paid, by any salary, but have to depend entirely upon commissions and fees; and that, as I have said, the commissions and fees proved so utterly inadequate that it became necessary in the interests of common fairness that they should be increased. Hence the great increase in the Estimate presented to Parliament. I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the enormous work done by the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade is paid for without one single penny charged coming out of the Treasury. It is paid for by fees, and there is no charge whatever upon the Treasury. The hon. Gentleman knows the amount of work that is done; and, therefore, I think he will agree with me that the Department cannot be called a very extravagant one. It is a new Department, comparatively speaking, and we are aware that at the time it was formed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) that right hon. Gentleman had to obtain the services of many very eminent professional men who were not Members of the Civil Service, and who were, perhaps, more lavish in their expenditure than they might have been had they been accustomed to the severe *régime* of the Civil Service. Take all this into consideration, and the amount of work which the Board of Trade does, and I think

that, although it may appear to hon. Gentlemen at first that these items are very large, it must appear to the Committee that the explanation I have been able to give with regard to the £12,000 increase in the remuneration to Country Receivers is satisfactory; and that we were not extravagant in giving this increased remuneration, but that originally the remuneration of these gentlemen was over-estimated and fell far below that to which they were entitled. Now, with regard to the £1,900 increase in respect of stationery. I have asked for an explanation of the item, and the explanation given to me is that owing to the New Rules and the vast number of forms and circulars which have to be sent about the country, it was absolutely impossible for the Board of Trade to make any approximate estimate of what the expense of the stationery would be. I find that the £1,900 is really rather under than over the mark of that which was required to defray the great expense attendant upon the printing and circulation of the forms and circulars in question. I think I have touched upon all the points which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has raised, and I hope I have succeeded in showing him that there is no room to charge the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade with extravagance, and that although these sums seem large they are almost and solely the result of the very heavy work thrown on the Board of Trade.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say in effect that the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade have so successfully plundered bankrupt estates that they are able to pay in fees and commissions to Country Receivers alone almost exactly double the amount that was necessary two years ago.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: That is not a proper interpretation of my remarks.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): Mr. Chairman, I object to the increased scale of remuneration paid to Country Receivers, but I do so on very different grounds to my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor). I object as an Irish Representative to Ireland being called upon to bear any share of this expenditure, inasmuch as the advantages arising out of he expenditure do not in the least

benefit my country. I have raised the question in this House before now, and got a reply from the right hon. Gentleman the then Secretary of the Board of Trade, to the effect that the Government would extend the present English practice to Ireland, but that they were strenuously opposed by six Irish Representatives. But I may point out to the Government that five of these so-called Obstructionists have no longer a seat in the House, and that consequently the position of the Government has grown to the smallest possible minimum.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is travelling very wide of the Vote. This Vote only relates to the Bankruptcy Law in England.

MR. P. McDONALD: I was endeavouring to explain that we have to bear our proportionate share of these increased items of £12,000 for Country Receivers and £1,900 for stationery to meet additional charges under the new Bankruptcy Rules. I for one protest against the increase.

THE CHAIRMAN: These sums are not raised by taxation in Ireland, but they are raised by fees in England.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I think the position taken up by the hon. Member (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has not been met by the reply of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade. He has confined himself to mere general statements. Any one who has any knowledge of business transactions will admit that an increase, whether it be in salaries or anything else, of from £33,000 in one year to £45,000 in another, requires some little detailed explanation. This the Secretary of the Board of Trade has not at present given.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There is another remark which occurs to me in consequence of the explanation given by the Secretary of the Board of Trade. I understood the hon. Gentleman (Baron Henry de Worms) to speak as though there was no cost to the country in respect of the remuneration of these Receivers, because the amount is paid out of fees; but surely he reckons the creditors as having some slight interest in the matter, and whether they pay it to the tax collector or pay it in fees to the Court, it is a matter of very little difference to them how their money is frittered away. What I would suggest

to the Committee is that we ought to be even more careful in voting an excess of this kind so put to us. It looks as if there was a disposition on the part of the Government to allow larger fees than necessary for the administration of justice because those fees are not paid directly by them. I see that shakes the stern mind of the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), and I dare say that it was a misapprehension on my part. Since I have been a Member of this House I have received many letters from creditors, who have asked me to take the earliest opportunity of exposing the way in which estates in Bankruptcy are frittered away, and this is the only opportunity I have had.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: In answer to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), I have to say that the increased fees are the result of the increase of bankruptcy business. We have to deal with a great number of bankrupt estates, and the fees attendant upon the business are very large. Last year the amount of the fees was £155,818, including the interest of money awaiting to be applied. The fees which were paid originally to Country Receivers were quite inadequate, and not only that, but the old system was considered unsatisfactory. That was the opinion of many judges, and the opinion of a large portion of the public, and for that reason the Board of Trade decided that the scale of fees must be increased, and the result is only adequate to the requirements of the Department.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.): I am quite sure that if the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) had the misfortune, as I very often, I am sorry to say, have had of looking at this question of fees from a creditor's point of view, he would come to a very different conclusion from that at which he has arrived—namely, that the Receivers are underpaid. If the hon. Gentleman, or any other Member of this House, will ask any traders who have the misfortune to become creditors in connection with bankruptcy cases in the English Courts, he will find that nine out of every ten will tell him that the Receivers are overpaid rather than underpaid. The right hon. Gentleman (Baron Henry de Worms) has just said that £155,818 was received last year, but that this

sum included interest upon money paid into Court. I would like the hon. Gentleman to state what the amount of that interest is, because one of the greatest hardships which creditors have to complain of in connection with bankruptcy cases is the great difficulty there is in getting the dividends, or any part of them, out of the hands of the Receivers. In fact, so long have creditors to wait in some cases that they actually give them up altogether, and forget all about them; if they do not keep constantly writing to these officers to hurry on the business, there is no chance whatever of despatch being observed in the conduct of bankruptcy proceedings. I never knew before that there was such an item in the bankruptcy accounts of the Board of Trade as interest on balances. That explains, perhaps, to a very large extent the reason why the dividends are not distributed more quickly. Naturally, the Department will not put pressure on the officers to distribute dividends when the dividends lying to the credit of the Board of Trade produce a certain annual revenue. There is one point I should like to press upon the attention of the right hon. Gentleman (Baron Henry de Worms). He said that the great increase of over 50 per cent on the cost of stationery during the past year is owing to the new Rules. Now, Sir, I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has seen the new forms which are being issued this year in connection with bankruptcy cases in English Courts, but, if he has, I think he will agree with me that the large expenditure in this Stationery Department is owing altogether to the immense and unnecessary large size of all forms issued in connection with bankruptcy proceedings. I think it would be worth the hon. Gentleman's while to look into this technical detail in connection with the working of this Department; because I am sure he will find that all the forms used in connection with the Bankruptcy Court could be reduced by one half their size, and, therefore, one half of this expenditure in the Stationery Department could be saved. The first thing that struck me when I saw these large forms coming to my office was that the size of them would necessarily involve a very large increase in connection with the expenditure upon bankruptcy proceedings. Everything connected with this Department is of very great importance to the mercantile com-

munity in the country, and I ask the hon. Gentleman (Baron Henry de Worms) to give his attention to these two matters: firstly, that the sums paid in to bankrupt estates should not be allowed to accumulate too long in the hands of the Receivers, or in the hands of the Department; and, secondly, the unnecessary large size of all the forms that are now issued in connection with bankruptcy affairs.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Lane) for the suggestions he has made. Coming from him, who has great practical experience, they are most valuable. Perhaps he will see his way to confer with me on the matter; but, at any rate, I promise the Committee I will look into the stationery question, and see whether any reduction of the £1,900 can be made. I am sorry to say that I have not got such figures with me as enable me to say what is the interest derived from monies paid into Court. I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman that there should be no delay in paying over the amounts due. The hon. Gentleman knows that the great object of the new Bankruptcy Department, which has worked very well, was to expedite the proceedings in bankruptcy, and I think he will agree with me that to a very large extent bankruptcy proceedings have been expedited.

MR. LANE: No doubt affairs in bankruptcy have been very largely improved from the trader's point of view since the Board of Trade has taken them in hand; but there is room for still further improvement, and especially in that particular matter which is of most vital importance—namely, prompt payment of dividends.

Vote agreed to.

(8) Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £4,595, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Civil Service Commission.”

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This Vote on account of the Civil Service Commission includes a charge of £2,600 on account of “bonuses and gratuities to temporary copyists under the Treasury Minute of the

22nd December, 1886.” I am afraid there is no one in the House at present who can say whether the Treasury Minute has yet been generally circulated and published, or whether it has been laid before the House; and if it has not been laid before the House, it appears to me a rather strange proceeding to come and ask for a Supplementary Estimate on these terms without the House being made acquainted with what those terms are; although from the wording of the Vote I have read it would appear that the temporary copyists are to be generously treated, yet as a matter of fact the very reverse is the case. The treatment which this item represents is of the meanest and most petty description. I do not know who is responsible for the Treasury Minute itself, or for the Minute which was submitted to the Lords of the Treasury before the Minute itself was issued; but of this I am satisfied, whatever he may be, or whoever he may be, he is a man of mean and sordid mind, utterly unfit to have the consideration of personal claims for justice, perfectly unfit to be allowed to sway the judgment of men in the responsible position of the Lords of the Treasury. Now, these temporary copyists are, perhaps, that portion of the public servants which is most badly and most unfairly treated. The injustice of their case is notorious, so notorious that no man, official or non-official, can be found to any longer contest the proposition. The Treasury themselves have been obliged to admit that their attitude with regard to these copyists is utterly indefensible. It was foreseen long ago that the position would be indefensible, and so far back as the year 1878 a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider the question and report upon it. I venture to ask the indulgence of the Committee while I cite a few words from the Report of the Committee. This Committee was appointed to inquire whether the writers appointed before 1871 had suffered any wrong or injustice by the cessation of the system of progressive rate of payment. They considered the question, took evidence, and made a Report, and they dwelt principally upon the terms of the Order in Council of the 19th August, 1871, under which the writers

Mr. Lane

then existing had practically three courses open to them. The first was that they might retain their employment in the same department only so long as their services might be required at the rate of pay they were receiving on the 19th of August, 1871, without any addition thereto on account of services following that day; or, secondly, they might accept a gratuity and retire from the Service; or, thirdly, having accepted the gratuity, to remain in their employment as writers at 10*d.* per hour. Many did accept the gratuity, and remained, because they were utterly unable to do anything else, having for years been in the Government Service. As a matter of fact these men were either forced to accept the gratuity and leave the Service, or to accept the gratuity and continue service at the miserable stipend of 10*d.* per hour. In the Admiralty they had been receiving 6*s.* 6*d.* a-day for six days in the week, with a rise of 3*d.* a day for each year's service. In the Customs their rate of pay averaged from 5*s.* 6*d.* to a maximum of 8*s.* 6*d.* In the War Office they went up to 7*s.* 6*d.* a-day after 10 years' service, and in other Departments they had rates of pay far exceeding what is now allowed. The Committee goes on—

“Previous to the Order in Council of August 1871, the heads of Departments had the power, which in every instance they exercised, of recommending their meritorious writers for increase of pay. Since the promulgation of the Order in Council this power no longer exists, so that the heads of Departments are no longer allowed to recommend these writers for more pay. As regards the duties of the writers now, it is in evidence that they are the same as they were before the increments were stopped, the writers being then employed on work of a responsible character, and sometimes in superintending and instructing others in their duty. In many cases it may be said that their work was that of clerks on the establishment.”

I can speak from personal knowledge; I have seen many clerks receiving 10*d.* per hour who were worth infinitely more than established clerks receiving £600 or £700 a-year.

“The pay of 10*d.* an hour was fixed on the supposition that the work of the writers was of a mechanical character, such as copying.”

And then the Committee concluded—

“Having considered all the matters brought before them, your Committee are of opinion that the restoration of the system of progres-

sive rate of payment will best meet the requirements of justice, give contentment to the writers, and promote the efficiency of the public service.”

From that day to this nothing whatever has been done in that direction for these men. They were reported upon by the Playfair Commission in 1876, and the Playfair Commission reported that the copyists throughout the whole Service would not exceed something like 100. That they were to be a kind of shifting balance, going from office to office as the exigencies of the work demand. What is the fact? So far from finding that 100 writers will do, there are now—and, I believe, have been pretty constantly since that day—no less than from 1,000 to 1,200 writers. What is the work these men do? They are not men exclusively employed as a 10*d.* an hour salary would appear to suggest; but they are men who have been continuously employed for five, six, seven, eight, 10, and 15 or more years. Still they are treated as merely temporary copyists, dismissible at a minute's notice, and not eligible for more than 10*d.* an hour for six hours a-day—30*s.* per week as the utmost they can obtain. Now, the Treasury, or the Civil Service Commission, having got its men into the Public Service, utilizes them in any way in which they can. I perfectly admit that very little blame, if any, can be attached to the heads of rooms or subdivisions in the different Departments. They are obliged to despatch the work for which they are responsible, and in order to do so they must make use of such material as they find at their hand; and, therefore, every head of sub-division or of branch will naturally turn to the despatch of any work whatever men he finds available, altogether irrespective of the status or pay of the men. And the consequence is that, on and off now for 15 years, during the whole time since this Committee of the House of Commons reported, we have had writers employed upon work far different from that for which they were engaged—far different from that which is recognized as proper work to be paid for at 10*d.* an hour. The writers do not complain of being put upon superior work. I dare say that, especially to the intelligent men among them, it is a relief to be put upon superior work. But what they complain of is, that if they do object to

the injustice of being put on this work at 10*d.* an hour they are instantly dismissed. They dare not refuse to take the work. They know that the head of a branch would at once say—"Then we will dispense with your services;" and these men have absolutely nothing before them in the world. They complain of being put to superior work if they are not paid anything like the rate of pay which other men more fortunately situated can command. At last the Treasury has been obliged to admit, as they do in this Minute of which I have got a copy—I have obtained a copy from a private source. The Committee appointed by the Treasury reported that they were forced to the conclusion that copyists had been employed to a greater extent than was contemplated by the Playfair Commission. That alone shows that they are a valuable class of public servants. The Committee further find that though nominally for temporary service, the copyists have in many cases been serving continuously for long periods in the same Departments. They found that there are from 1,000 to 1,200 now in the Service, and they say that probably 300 are employed merely upon copying. They admit that three out of every four men are doing work better than that for which they were nominally engaged. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) shakes his head. I will read the *ipsisima verba*. "Mere copying may employ, according to their estimate, about 300 registered copyists." Three hundred appears to me to bear the same proportion to 1,200 as one does to four.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Surely, 300 out of 1,200 can hardly be calculated as three out of four.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The hon. Gentleman cannot have heard me correctly. The Committee say "mere copying may employ, according to their estimate, about 300 registered copyists." 300 out of 1,200, or 25 per cent. Well, the other men are employed upon something better than mere copying, and these men number 900, and 900 is to 300 as 3 to 1. It is, therefore, clear that 900 out of the 1,200 are engaged in superior work. Further on, the Committee say that—

"Of the remaining work about 40 per cent of it is mostly of a mixed character, the duties

of each copyist being partly mechanical and partly such as requires some special knowledge and experience."

They say, further—

"It may, therefore, be accepted that about one-third of the work entrusted to copyists is of a higher order than that for which the pay of 10*d.* an hour, fixed by Order in Council in 1878, is intended."

Now then, mark the spirit by which my Lords are moved. My Lords agree with the conclusion of the Committee, that the conditions of service are not so unfavourable as they are sometimes represented to be, and that the men have a fair chance of obtaining better and more permanent positions in the Civil Service. They do not say a word about the fact that the men are debarred from the permanent Civil Service, and, at present, by the bar of age. But that is not all; my Lords of the Treasury think that the men have a fair chance of obtaining better and more permanent positions in the Civil Service, or elsewhere, and—

"That those who have been unable to obtain such positions could not command in the market better terms than they now obtain."

I should like to know what terms the gentleman who drafted this Minute would be likely to get in the open market for his services? What would any of the permanent superior Staff of your Public Offices be able to obtain in the public market? These men can be obtained, no doubt, as temporary copyists at 10*d.* an hour; and why, because there are so many thousands and tens of thousands out of employment; because times are bad; and because a starving man cannot haggle about the rate of remuneration, when, if he refuses what is offered, he must go into the workhouse. It is the workhouse and the distress which is enabling you to treat these men so unfairly; but if it is true that you can obtain a large number of men at 10*d.* an hour, it is equally true that you can fill the whole of the Public Departments with men quite as good as you have now in them at one-third of the salary. Why should you apply this test to these men, who have no power to state their case, without personal danger, which you fail to apply to any other portion of the Public Service. Well, this Committee goes on to say—

"But it is not improbable that such men have only taken copying employment because they, for one reason or another, have failed to secure

better positions in early life; and the market value of their services, as tested by their success, can hardly be put higher than that which they earn."

If that is so, if my Lords believe what they write, they have no business at all to improve the position of these men, as they propose to do; but they have admitted that this is not true. They make as strong a case as they can against these men; they affect to believe that the Treasury case is absolute, and admits of no qualification, and then they affect, out of grace, to concede something. Now, we shall consider what it is they concede. The Committee reported that about one-third of the work now done by copyists is superior to that they were intended to do, and what do my Lords do? They calculate the services of these copyists, and find that one-third of them have had more than eight years' service; and they say that because one-third of the copyists throughout the Service are doing work superior to that they were engaged to do at 10*d.* an hour; and because, also, one-third of the copyists have had more than eight years' service, we will, to make up for the anomaly, and to put things straight, give a bonus to those who have had eight years' service. The fact is this, that of the writers in the Civil Service it is not altogether the men of long service who are doing the superior work. There are many men who after a year or two's service have been put upon work of a very responsible character. Therefore, to give to a poor old fellow, who may not be worth more than 10*d.* an hour, a gratuity because he has been eight years in the Service is no satisfaction to those copyists who are doing superior work though they have not been eight years in the Service. The man who drafted this Minute was not only a man of mean and sordid soul, but most stupid and incompetent. He does not know how to deal with the business which comes before him, and it is a great pity that the Lords of the Treasury ever consented to listen to his suggestions. Now, what are his suggestions? They are that after copyists have been in the Service for eight years they shall be allowed a gratuity. And I am sure I shall rather startle the Committee by making known to them the extent of the generosity of the Treasury. After a copyist has been doing superior work for eight years he

is to be allowed a gratuity of 30*s.*, that is a penny a day, and when he has had nine years' service he is to be allowed a gratuity of two-pence a day. And so does it go on, if he is allowed to continue in the Service, year by year increasing. But so careful is the Treasury of the Public Money when this kind of service is to be paid for that there is a clause specially put in preventing anyone getting a gratuity of more than £50. [Mr. JACKSON: Per annum.] Yes, the maximum gratuity is £50. But one copyist has calculated that he will reach the age of 97 before he ever receives the maximum. That is the way this Treasury, so ready to squander tens of thousands of pounds upon buildings on the Continent, and hundreds of thousands and millions in unjustifiable aggression abroad, treat men who serve them well. The whole story is a disgrace to the Administration, and I doubt very much whether there is a Government in Europe, however poor or new, that would have been capable of so dirty a transaction as this is. The House of Commons has inquired into it already. The Committee of 1873 has said that these men being continually employed for long periods at responsible work ought to receive an increase in their rate of pay. That appears to me to be a most reasonable proposition. It is one which is acted upon in every other branch of the Public Service, whether Civil, Military, or Naval. Why these men should be excluded from it I cannot understand; but this proposal of the Treasury, instead of meeting the grievance, is practically an insult to a body of men who have deserved well of the State, because if they had not they would have been forced to retire long ago. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £2,600, being the amount set down for bonuses and gratuities to temporary copyists under the Treasury Minute of 22nd December, 1886.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,995, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service."—(Mr. Arthur O'Connor.)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am rather in a difficulty to know what it is the hon. Member (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) really desires. He has com-

plained, and complained in terms that are more forcible than polite, of the action of the Treasury in connection with this matter.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I hope the hon. Gentleman did not take it to be personal. It was not meant to be so.

MR. JACKSON: I know the hon. Gentleman too well to imagine that he meant what he said to apply to me personally. But to speak of the action of the Treasury as dirty is not a very polite way of speaking. The hon. Gentleman has quoted from a Minute which has not been circulated to the House, but which has been presented to a Commission of which the hon. Member is a member.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: That is not the way I obtained a copy.

MR. JACKSON: I desire the Committee to understand—

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I think I am entitled to the protection of the Chair from the insinuation which is contained in the observation of the Secretary to the Treasury. It is perfectly true that the Minute in question has been furnished to the Civil Service Commission, of which I am a member. It is perfectly true that I have seen it so in print, but the paper from which I read was a manuscript copy, which was made before the Minute was supplied to the Commission at all. If what the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jackson) says means anything at all, it means this, that I being a member of the Commission, have used documents which came into my power or possession as a member of that Commission in a way in which I had no right to use them, and have quoted them in this House before they could have become available in the ordinary course. If that is so I beg to give the most emphatic contradiction to the statement of the hon. Gentleman.

MR. JACKSON: I have not the slightest desire or intention to cast upon the hon. Member any reproach for having obtained a copy of this Minute. But what I was about to say was that this Minute, as he knows, has been presented to a Commission of which he is a member, and that that Commission will presently have an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon the action of the Treasury in regard to this particular class of persons. They will also

have an opportunity, if they choose to avail themselves of it, of having evidence supplied to them by members connected with these services, and therefore it seems to me, perhaps, a little premature to express the very decided opinion which the hon. Member (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has allowed himself to express. The hon. Member spoke of the Treasury in terms which certainly were not very complimentary, and spoke of them as having taken advantage of the distress in the country for refusing to do to this class of men justice. Now, Sir, surely the hon. Member knows perfectly well that there never has been the smallest difficulty in obtaining men for the position of writers, even during the period which was considered the period of the greatest prosperity in the country. It has nothing whatever to do with the distress in the country that the present wages are paid to the writers. I will go further, and I will tell the hon. Member that I have just as much sympathy with these writers as he has. It became my duty to deal with this, one of the most difficult questions which it would be in the recollection of the House has been before this House for a long time, and with which, apparently, successive Secretaries to the Treasury have refused or neglected to deal. I admit that the position which these writers occupy is not one which is very satisfactory. I admit, also, that the rate of payment is exceedingly low; but I maintain that a man who is in the position of a trustee of public money is bound to see, as far as he can, that the public money is not wasted, and that prices higher than market prices are not paid. [MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: In all cases.] In all cases, I admit. Now, Sir, what are the facts in regard to these copyists? The hon. Gentleman said, and he would apparently lead the House to believe, that there was great difficulty in these men obtaining better employment. He knows perfectly well, if he has read the Minutes, that out of 5,000 copyists who have entered the Service, only 1,468 of them remain in the Service at the present day. Of these 1,027 have retired, most of them avowedly, and the rest presumably to obtain better employment; while permanent employment in the Public Service has been obtained by 2,109. The hon. Member

knows that there is no bar to these men passing into the higher divisions of the Service except the bar of being unable to pass the examination which is necessary. [Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Age is a barrier.] But most of them have entered the Service at an age at which they could have passed into the permanent service. [Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: There were no vacancies.] But if they had passed the examination they would have got positions in the permanent service when vacancies occur, and, therefore, so far as that point is concerned, I think it may be taken as absolutely disposed of. Sir, I admit, as I have said, that these men occupy a position which is not satisfactory. The Treasury, recognizing that fact, have taken the only practical step they could take to prevent the continuance of it for any very long period of time; and they have decided, as the hon. Member knows, that the list of writers shall be closed, and, in fact, no further applicants shall be placed on the register. I am not at all sure that the action of the Treasury is not the more cruel of the two, and a great many men are thereby prevented from joining the Service and earning 30s. a week, which the hon. Member seems to despise, for I believe there are thousands of men in this country who are competent to do this work, and who would be glad to do it at a time like this at 30s. per week. Sir, the hon. Member spoke of the conclusion at which the Treasury had arrived. The object of the Treasury was as far as possible to do justice within the limits of the line which they had laid down for themselves—namely, that they were not justified in spending the public money lavishly. They endeavoured, as far as they could, to find a reasonable line, so that the men who may continue in the employment may continue to improve their condition, and to receive a higher rate of pay; and although it may seem a long time before these men reach the maximum, you have it in evidence that the Supplementary Vote which is now before the Committee is for £4,595. This is expected to come in course of payment in the course of the coming year. The estimated cost of the small bonuses to which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) referred, coupled with the gratuities which may become payable to those who voluntarily retire, repre-

sents at least £6,000 a-year; and I say, Sir, that those who are responsible for the finances of this country owe a duty to the taxpayer, and that the advance under this particular class of £6,000 a-year is not an advance which is to be despised or to be considered small. I know that, whatever was done, it would be impossible to give entire satisfaction. I believe that the closing of the register may have a good effect upon many of these men. The hon. Member must not forget that the position of writer has been sought for by young men partly as a means of subsistence for the time, and partly as a training ground within which to learn the duties which they had to perform to enable them more easily to pass the examination for the higher divisions of the Service. And it has been because it has been so valuable to young men who have used it for this purpose, that there has been such an enormous number of candidates always waiting any vacancies which may occur. I do not deny for one moment that the question is one beset with difficulties. It is beset with difficulties, and any question will be beset with difficulties wherever you have a larger number of candidates than you have places to give to them. I maintain that it is our bounden duty, as far as we can, while doing justice to the Service, to prevent the waste of the public money in paying for services more than their market value.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport): I cannot agree with my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) that we should do right to vote against the appropriation of this sum of £2,600. We should be acting contrary to the interests of the writer class if we refused to take this sum, though we may only consider it an instalment of justice. We have certainly just grounds for hoping that when the case is thoroughly threshed out before the Commission, something better than that now proposed will be obtained. Of course I fully appreciate the motive of my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor); he has taken a very great and intelligent interest in this question from the very beginning, but nevertheless, I cannot go the length of voting with him against the granting of these bonuses and gratuities. It has been said that whilst evidence will be admitted before the Commission it will

be of a somewhat restricted character. I trust we may receive the assurance from the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), that the question of the writers will be fully and adequately discussed before the Royal Commission; it certainly is expected that the Commission will afford every opportunity of thoroughly threshing the question out. Now, I want to take issue with my hon. Friend (Mr. Jackson) on one point. The whole tenour of his speech was that we must be careful not to increase unnecessarily the calls upon the taxpayers of the country. My contention is, and always has been, that the reorganization of the Civil Service would, instead of entailing any additional burden upon the taxpayers, really result in a large saving of money. I have on one or two previous occasions illustrated this by quoting the figures of the Return which you, Mr. Courtney, were good enough to grant me when you occupied the position of Secretary to the Treasury. Any one who will take the trouble to study the figures of that Return will see that all the little reforms wanting in the Civil Service, including the writers, would be fully and adequately met with advantage to the State and with satisfaction to all concerned, not at the expense of the State, but at a very considerable saving of money to the State. We are not prepared to admit that the Civil Service of this country is carried on on the basis of supply and demand. If it is so, let the principle be applied all round—in the highest as well as the lowest grades of the Service. We consider that the most efficient men in the Service are those who have fixity of tenure, those who feel that by entering the Civil Service they are provided for for life, and that it is necessary for them to devote all their zeal and energy to the Public Service. That is the right principle upon which the Civil Service should be carried on, and my hon. Friend (Mr. Jackson) will excuse me for saying that the doctrine he has advanced—the doctrine of supply and demand—is, as applied to the Civil Service, an entirely new and novel one. I do not remember that the doctrine was ever advanced by Her Majesty's Government before the great interest in the case of the Lower Division Clerks and in that of the writers sprung up a couple of years ago. It is said that the writers are not to be increased in

number. It was supposed by the Playfair Commission that the writers were a diminishing body; but as a matter of fact they have been an increasing body. By engaging these writers continuously, and by setting them to superior work, we only raise in them false hopes. I believe that by the Treasury Minute to which reference has been made, it is admitted that one-third of the writers are doing work of a superior character. What is this superior work? The superior work that a writer who gets 10*d.* an hour does is the work of the clerk, sitting by his side, who gets £300, £400, or £500 a-year. That is admitted by my hon. Friend (Mr. Jackson), and by those who acted with him in the production of this Treasury Minute. This Minute either goes too far or not far enough. It would have been perfectly intelligible to have issued no such Minute. As it has been admitted that one-third of these men earning 10*d.* an hour are doing the work of clerks who are on the permanent establishment, and who earn from £300 to £500 a-year, I could have understood a proposal to make them an allowance commensurate with the work they do. The Government refuse to recognize the superior work *per se*, but offer the men who have been eight years in the Service 6*d.* a-week extra. I cannot but regret the issuing of a Minute such as this because, as I say, it either goes too far or does not go far enough, and it operates unjustly in regard to a large portion of the men. I regret very much that my hon. Friend has not seen his way to justify another and a better conclusion.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I do not know that there is anything more charming than to see the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) rise in his place, when jobs of an enormous character are being carried out, with no better argument to call to his aid in answer to an appeal on behalf of the poorest paid body of clerks in this or any other Service—the argument about the duty of those who are entrusted with the guardianship of the national purse. Why does he not make use of that argument when dealing with the lavish manner in which money is spent to buy a house at Cairo, and to provide funds for a Special Commissioner to the East. The hon. Gentleman in his open-

ing remarks said he does not understand what my hon. Friend desires. Well, for my own part, I think the speech of my hon. Friend was perfectly lucid. It was certainly understood by every other Member of the Committee, and when the Secretary to the Treasury says he cannot understand it I am bound to regard the position of the hon. Gentleman as peculiar, seeing that having made that statement he immediately proceeded to answer the arguments of my hon. Friend. The Secretary to the Treasury has passed over one little point with regard to the Minute which has been read here this evening. He asks—"Why discuss this Minute since it will be sent before the Royal Commission?" But for the past 15 years you have put off the claims of these miserably paid Civil servants always on the same ground—that there is a Commission or Committee or some other body examining into the case. Year after year the claims of these people have been brought forward in Committee of Supply. The subject has been brought forward in the House by way of Motion. Year after year the same stereotyped answer is given—"Oh! we cannot give you a definite answer now because the subject is just going to be considered by a Royal Commission." I should have thought that the Government had enough Commissions on their hands without taking one for these subjects. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury justifies the small and insufficient pay of these hard working officials on the ground—and the Committee will admit that this is the most astounding of all his arguments—that there is no difficulty in obtaining men for these positions. I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman whether there would be any difficulty to obtain men to fill the position he holds? If the post of Secretary to the Treasury were to come to competition would there not be plenty of Gentlemen come forward on that side of the House to compete for it? And is there any difficulty in obtaining men for the permanent staff of the Civil Service? How many men apply for every situation vacant? Why just as many, if not more, as apply for these minor offices. Do you account for underpaying these clerks by the fact that they are easy to get? If not why do you refer to there being no difficulty

in obtaining men. The Secretary to the Treasury admits in almost a tone of humiliation that these officials are underpaid. Then what is he going to do with regard to them? He refers to the Commission, and again deals for a few minutes with the duties of a trustee of public money. He states that they have had 34,000 applications for these positions. Why, how many thousands of applications have you had for positions in the higher grades of the Service? You have actually had more. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury did not for a moment touch upon this extra pay which my hon. Friend told us these writers are to receive—he made no defence whatever of this paltry 1*d.* per day which is to be paid to the men who have been so many years in the service of this country. It seems that the men are to get an advance of 1*d.* a-day one year and another 1*d.* a-day another year. It was not worth your while holding an inquiry into the matter if you have nothing more generous to offer than 1*d.* a-day to these hard working servants of the Civil Service. Then, there is another point—this gratuity of £20 which you propose to give to some of these men. What is the object of that? Is the payment of a few paltry pounds supposed to be an inducement to the men to leave the Service? That amount would not support them for more than two or three months, economic as they might be. Then the work they did in the Civil Service would have to be done by someone. Who is to do it if these men leave? The Secretary to the Treasury admitted that these men are not doing the work for which they were originally retained. He admitted, and this Minute admits, and the Report of the Committee admits, that a large number of them are employed on the work of the higher grade—in doing work that the permanent officials would do if there were enough of them. The Secretary to the Treasury shakes his head. Why it is in the Report, and he admitted it in his remarks when he had the dispute as to whether 300 to 1,200 was the same as three to one. He admitted that these writers who do the superior work of permanent officials are to be induced to retire. The money which is to be offered them is simply a bribe to retire. The hon. Gentleman says—"They will have the opportunity of obtaining employ-

ment in the open market." Why I should have thought that the experience of a gentleman connected with the Government as to the training for the Civil Service in this country would have made it impossible for such a statement as that to come from the Secretary to the Treasury. The Civil Service training in this country, as everyone who has any knowledge of the subject is aware, renders it impossible for an old Civil Service employé to obtain employment in the open market. These men, after leaving the Government Service, hardly ever obtain any other employment, because they are so entirely incapacitated for it. The purely mechanical method of working which prevails amongst the lower orders of the Civil Service renders a man who has been in that Service a few years incapable of being of real assistance in a mercantile office. It is impossible for such a person to compete with the regular employés in the commercial service. So that when you have had these underpaid men in your service for eight or 10 or 15 years, and then tempt them to retire by the offer of a miserable gratuity of a few pounds, you are simply sending them to starvation. ["No, no!"] Someone says "No, no!" but I ask those who have had experience of the Civil Service whether what I say is not the fact? I ask, further, whether, if a man who has been in the Civil Service goes to a mercantile office and asks for employment he is likely to get it? He is not; none of them are likely to obtain employment unless they take to literature, and it is needless to say that only a very small fraction of them can do that. What the Secretary to the Treasury has said, in short, is no answer to the claims of these men, and I trust my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will go to a Division to mark our sense of the bad and ungenerous way in which these writers have been treated for so many years.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): As the Committee is perhaps aware, I feel great sympathy for these Civil Service writers, and having more than once advocated their cause in this House, I should like to say a word now. I would respectfully submit that this discussion is somewhat premature, for this reason that great reliance has been placed on the Treasury Minute,

but up to now that Minute has only been seen by two Gentlemen—namely, the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) and my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson). The Committee generally have not had an opportunity of studying it. That Treasury Minute has, as I understand, been brought before the Royal Commission, who will have full power to report upon it. If there is any doubt on that point, I may say I am authorized to state that the question of the position of these Civil Servants is open to the Commission to investigate. I am at a loss to understand why hon. Gentlemen, who support the cause of these writers, wish to reduce the amount of this Vote by striking off an item which must tend to improve the position of these writers, although it may appear to some not to go far enough and not to deal satisfactorily with the case. I fail to see why Gentlemen who are advocating the cause of these writers should reject a scheme which awards an amount of about £6,000 per annum, and which, to a great extent, admits the difficulties of the question and the goodness of the case of these Civil Service writers. It may be that the £6,000 does not make a sufficient provision; it may be that the remedy that is proposed is not sufficiently sweeping; but that will be a matter which the Commission can investigate. How we, sitting here this evening with no knowledge of the Treasury Minute, can investigate the question thoroughly and satisfactorily I am at a loss to know. I would most respectfully suggest, therefore, that the case of the copyists would be, to a certain extent, prejudiced by a hostile Division on the Treasury Minute. I would suggest that it would be well to stop this debate, which, as I have said, is somewhat premature, and to adopt the offering of the Treasury, reserving to all who are interested in the case, the right of examining into the Treasury Minute, and the case put before the Royal Commission.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I can quite understand the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down making the suggestion he has offered to the House. It is a very natural suggestion to come from one who does not know the contents of the Treasury Minute. That

Treasury Minute, if acted upon now, will commit the Committee to a certain line—it will precipitate a line of conduct from which there will be no retreat afterwards. This Vote is not only for bonuses for men of a certain length of service who remain in the Service, but it is also for gratuities to be paid to men who leave the Service under the Treasury Minute. One of the terms of the Minute under which these gratuities are to be given was to the effect that any man accepting a gratuity, if hereafter he could, by examination, prove himself fit for higher service in the Civil Service, would, before he could be appointed to such higher service, have to repay to the public the amount of gratuity which had been paid to him on leaving the lower grade. So that an unfortunate writer who accepts a gratuity of £20, and then, six months afterwards, by the exercise of patience and toil, succeeds in passing through a competition, is not to be allowed to reap the benefit of so passing by entering into the Service he has proved himself fit for, without surrendering the £20 upon which he has had to live during the intermediate six months. It is perfectly impossible for the Committee to pass this Vote, and then to say that the question still remains open for consideration. The situation is irrecoverable once you commit yourselves to this Vote. But I imagine that for the Government to come down here and ask the Committee to vote a sum like this, before the terms upon which it is founded have been laid before us, is a course open to much greater objection than can be raised to any other part of the scheme of the Treasury. If this decision is premature, why do we not postpone the Vote until the discussion can be maintained with advantage? But I would undertake to show to any man of reasonable and fair mind, who will have the patience to listen to the facts of the case—I will convince him by giving 20, or 30, or 80 instances of living men—that the terms of this Treasury Minute are most inequitable. I will use no stronger language than that. With regard to the strong language of which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) complained, I am very sorry that he should have thought he had reason to object to the terms I employed. It is not necessary, I am sure,

for me to disclaim any personal application of those terms. Such a thing never entered into my thoughts. I do not feel now that the hon. Gentleman is responsible for the difficulty; and I am certain it is a Gentleman of a very different class of mind from the hon. Member to whom this Minute is to be traced. But the Committee cannot appreciate the proposals involved in the Vote at the present moment. If the Vote is taken, the line of conduct adopted by the Treasury will have been sanctioned, and there will be no retreat. The status of the men who remain in the Service as writers will be compromised. If I could see my way fairly in discharge of my simple duty, as a Member of the House, knowing the facts of the case, to do so, I should be glad to withdraw all opposition to the Vote, hoping that, on a future occasion, the matter would be dealt with; but the proposal that the matter is now before a Royal Commission, and may be well left to that Commission, is most futile. That Commission will probably not report for a couple of years to come; and, at the most, can only report from time to time on comparatively small sections of the whole question. Probably upon the point we are discussing, its Report will not cover more than the question of the grant provided for in this Vote. It appears to me that there is nothing left for the Committee to do but to protest against the iniquitous way in which these writers are treated by dividing against the Vote.

MR. SCLATER - BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I am surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) referring to the Royal Commission on the Civil Establishments as though their proceedings are such as will relieve the Treasury from the difficulty of dealing with the question of the position of these writers. I cannot agree with the view that the grievances of the Civil servants are in any way before the Royal Commission. At all events, I have accepted a post on that Commission on a very different understanding. It was offered to me on totally different grounds; and it was with the greatest surprise that I heard from the right hon. Gentleman that a large portion of the time of the Commission was expected to be employed in listening to the grievances of these clerks. Already a great

deal has been done to embarrass the prospects of the Commission of arriving at an early decision; and it seems to me that if we are expected to go into these questions, as the right hon. Gentleman indicates, those prospects are likely to be a great deal more embarrassed.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport): It seems to me that we are in a great difficulty, after the speech of my right hon. Friend who has just sat down, and in view of the remarks which fell from the Secretary for the Colonies, who was formerly Financial Secretary to the Treasury. I had hoped to hear some favourable response to the proposal to postpone this Vote to another day. I should not like to reduce the Vote, as it would be taking away from the Civil Service writers an instalment of that advantage which we hope is in store for them in the future. I had hoped, after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. H. H. Fowler) last year, that the subject of the position of writers would be thoroughly threshed out in the Treasury Minute. The question arose before the Royal Commission was thought of at all, and I came to the conclusion, when the Commission was set on foot, that we should have the case of these clerks, with other cases, thoroughly threshed out. But, in view of the remarks of my right hon. Friend who has just sat down, I do not know where we are at all. I do hope that for the present, at all events, this Vote will not be pressed to a Division. If it is so pressed, it will place those who desire to support the Government in a very difficult position indeed. I trust the proposal for the postponement of the Vote will be accepted.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, East): As the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Puleston) has referred to me, I may be allowed to point out what was the position of the matter when the late Government left Office. I am speaking under some difficulty, not having heard the whole of the discussion this evening. I would point out, however, that the Minute was not prepared or contemplated when I left Office. The Minute I had occasion to allude to was in reference to Lower Division clerks. I stated to the House, I think, on the last day of last Session, that I had appointed a Departmental Committee to examine into the whole

question of the writers, believing that they had a very substantial grievance. Pending the Report of the Committee, I was not prepared, however, to express my opinion upon the matter. There was then before the Treasury a Minute dealing with another and totally different branch of the subject—namely, the grievances and claims of the Lower Division clerks who are permanent members of the Civil Service, and who complained of their position as compared with that of the Higher Division clerks. We have also the complaints of the writers who are not permanent members of the Civil Service, but are only casually and temporarily employed. Then a Royal Commission was announced to us with reference to Civil Service expenditure; and after I had accepted a post on that Commission, on the same understanding as the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Slater-Booth), I was astounded to find, towards the end of the Session, that the whole question of the Lower Division clerks was to be referred to the Commission. If I had contemplated that course, I should have been in favour of that which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) recommended from this Bench last July—namely, that the case of these persons should be heard before a Committee of this House. I do not hesitate to say that nothing has been done which will tend more to neutralize the effect of the inquiry of the Commission in the sense in which the Commission was formed, than the adding to its duties of this question of the position of the Lower Division clerks. The question of the writers is not before the Commission, and does not come within its purview. As a member of the Commission, I am speaking the sense of that body; and I think I am speaking the sense of the right hon. Gentleman opposite when I say that we shall all object to this additional work being cast upon us. We have endeavoured to do the best we can with reference to the Lower Division clerks; but we cannot undertake to deal with the question of writers, seeing that it in no way forms part of the duties we undertook. I am sure I should be happy to do all in my power to assist the Secretary to the Treasury. I know the difficulties which surround him, and the pressure which is brought to bear upon him in connection with matters of

this kind; but, as this is simply a Supplementary Estimate, I would put it to him whether it would not be better to withdraw the Vote at the present time, and leave it to come up again next year. So far as the Royal Commission which is now sitting is concerned, you have heard one of its members from the other side of the House, and now you have heard me—another of its members—repudiate the idea that the body, under the terms of its Reference, can be called upon to consider the case of these writers.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I am afraid after the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, it is incumbent on me to say that this day the Commission did take this point into consideration. I should not be dealing frankly with the House if I did not make that statement. But so far from the Government intending the Commission to deal with this question, and so far from their believing that it would, some time after they had appointed it they issued this Minute without waiting for the Report of the Commission.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): After what the right hon. Gentleman opposite has said I should like to explain how this matter came before the Commissioners at all. The right hon. Gentleman has said—and I invite the Committee to listen to these remarks—that as he had undertaken, and as the Committee will remember, he appointed a Departmental Committee to thoroughly consider the question of the writers. Sir, that Committee did carefully consider the question of the writers, and this Minute is the embodiment of the unanimous Report of that Committee. Therefore, Sir, so far as the Committee has any weight you have their unanimous opinion that the proposal contained in this Minute is fair and equitable under the circumstances. The Treasury, when the Committee had reported, considered their Report and framed this Estimate. The Treasury considered themselves bound by the fact, which I believe was thoroughly recognized, that the Civil Service Commission was at liberty to inquire into any and every question connected with the Civil Service. One of the first things they did was to lay before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Civil Services

a copy of this Minute to show what the Treasury's conclusion was. Sir, I think the Government must take their stand upon this Minute. The question has been fully and carefully considered, and this Minute embodies the view of the Government upon the question. They have no desire to prejudice in any way the opinion of the Royal Commission. They have submitted this Minute to the Commission in the hope that the Commissioners will consider it and, if necessary, will make a recommendation upon it. If they make such a recommendation I am sure the Government will be very glad to give it every consideration possible. Sir, it is no use going back upon this question. It has, I assure the Committee, been most carefully considered, and to refer it back again would not be to improve the condition of the writers. My own impression is that little as is the amount in this Vote, to refer it back would involve an additional burden on one branch of the Service, and one branch of the Service, let me remind the Committee, which is not a branch of the established Civil Service of the country. These men take the position of writers in the full and complete knowledge that their occupation and employment is only temporary. That must be clearly borne in mind; therefore I say that when you consider that this is an additional charge of £6,000 a-year to this very limited and temporary employment, hard as the measure is to these men, under all the circumstances justice has been done.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has just answered hostilely to himself a previous speech made upon this Vote. Earlier he advised the Committee that the Minute referred to by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) was not before the Committee, and that we could not deal with it, and now he says that the Government take their stand upon it. If the Government take their stand upon it, I submit that it is most unfair to put the Vote to the Committee without letting the Committee have the Minute on which the Government so take their stand.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): By way of explanation I should like to say that I was not present at the meeting of the Commission to which the Member for East Donegal

referred, and that, therefore, I was not aware that the Commission had touched this question. I would ask what is the position of the Government, and what is the position of the Commission? The hon. Member opposite says he is going to take a Vote that practically endorses the Minute. Surely then, the Commission is not going to sit as a Court of Appeal against the decision of the hon. Gentleman? I think the Government might themselves decide the question. It is not a matter for the Royal Commission. If we endorse the policy of the Government, are we, who are not Members of the Government, and who, some of us, are not even Members of the House, to sit in judgment at the Commission on the decision of this Committee?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The answer is that it would seem better that no expression of opinion should be taken against one side or the other. That is precisely the point put by the Secretary to the Treasury.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Then postpone the Vote.

MR. GOSCHEN: It would be against the interests of the writers themselves that the Vote should be postponed. The Treasury are of opinion that these bonuses should be given. They will be given; but if, in the future, the Treasury should consider that this Minute is not effective, we shall be able to change it and give higher gratuities. It must be obvious to the Committee that it will be against the interests of the writers themselves to have these sums struck out. As to the Commission itself, I am sorry that there has been a misunderstanding. I should be glad to hear from the Chairman of the Commission and other Members authoritatively what they consider their duty in the matter. Bodies of this kind usually show a stronger inclination to extend than to narrow their authority. However, there is no desire on the part of the Treasury to place any duty upon the Commission which does not legitimately belong to it.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport): We are asked to vote on this question by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the ground that the Royal Commission will thresh the matter out. The right hon. Gentleman expressed some surprise that we should have any doubt whatever as to this being a subject which will come

before the Commission. Well, we have very good reason to doubt it. We find here to-night two influential Members of the Royal Commission who altogether repudiate that the Commission has anything whatever to do with this question. May I be allowed to state that I had some conversation with the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, before this Royal Commission was thought of, on the subject of appointing a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the question of Civil Servants. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) expressed himself upon that occasion in favour of carrying out what was practically promised at the end of last Session by the then Secretary to the Treasury, and his Predecessors, in pursuance of the decision of the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer came to the conclusion—I hope I am not doing wrong by repeating a private conversation—that a Parliamentary Committee was the best thing. On further considering the question, however, and the other questions coming out of it, the noble Lord decided to enlarge the scope of the inquiry, and to turn it into a Royal Commission. Since then I have heard—as we hear a good many things—what has been stated here to-night, that this question of Civil Service clerks, particularly the writers, is absolutely repudiated by some Members of the Royal Commission. I understand that there are three Members of the Royal Commission in the House. We have had expressions from two to-night. We are asked to go to a Vote on the understanding that this Minute will go to the Royal Commission. It is said that we must look upon this Vote as an instalment, coupled with the very generous remarks we have heard from the Representatives of the Government, that something better might be hoped from the Royal Commission. That, in view of the contradictory statements made, places some of us on this side of the House in a position of considerable difficulty; therefore, I would again appeal to the Secretary to the Treasury to postpone the Vote.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): The Committee is certainly placed in a difficulty, if the Government do not consent to postpone the Vote. I took part for several years in an agitation on behalf of the Civil Service

writers, therefore I may claim to be allowed to say a word in the discussion. We are told that the amount placed in the Supplementary Estimate is based on the Report of the Committee which was appointed to consider this matter and which has been embodied in a Treasury Minute. But that Minute has only been seen by two Members of the House—the hon. Member on this side (Mr. A. O'Connor) and the Secretary to the Treasury. The Committee is asked to endorse the Minute by voting the sum of £6,000. My view of the matter is this. The Vote may be right, but we ought to see the Minute before we agree to it. I am anxious that the Civil Service writers should obtain more liberal payment, and therefore I do not wish to stand in the way of this Vote for more money. It would, consequently, be difficult for me to vote one way or the other. I do not know what reasons the Secretary to the Treasury has to give against the postponement of the Vote, but it certainly appears to me that he should postpone it, and that before he brings it on again he should give hon. Members an opportunity of seeing the Minute upon which his proposal is based. I would urge the hon. Gentleman to postpone the Vote.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I hope the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will follow the advice given to him on both sides of the House, and postpone this Vote. I am very much afraid if the Vote is decided to-night that when the writers make their demand in the future they will be told, "Oh! you have received your £6,000 and must rest content. The question is closed; you have got what you expected, and need not ask for anything more." I have taken great interest in this subject for many years. I have asked repeated Questions of various Secretaries to the Treasury with regard to it, and I have always been told that a Committee is sitting or that some other inquiry is proceeding. But we have never seen any Report of any Commission or any Minute of any kind. This, I think, is the first time the Committee has been asked to vote a sum of money without seeing the Minute on which the Treasury based their opinion. I hope after all that Ministers will accede

to the request of hon. Members, and will consent to postpone the Vote.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I would point out to the Committee that we continually vote money without the Minutes on which the Votes are based being placed before us. I may inform hon. Members that I would gladly undertake this—If the Committee will pass this Vote and give to these writers the boon which they will find in this increase of remuneration, the Minute shall be produced and laid before the House. I will also undertake that the question shall be further examined. I will communicate with the Royal Commission and see whether they care to undertake that examination, and if they do not, I will see that it is further examined by someone else.

MR. PULESTON: By a Committee of the House?

MR. GOSCHEN: No, I will not undertake that for this reason, that I do not think that a political body is the best body for dealing with the salaries of Civil servants. There is a constant and not unnatural complaint of the increasing cost of Government, and it must be remembered that a large number of Civil servants, like others, have votes, and if Parliamentary pressure is brought to bear the Estimates will continue to increase. I would make this appeal to the Committee, that they should not insist upon political forces dealing with this question of the writers, but that they should place confidence in a further inquiry and leave me to communicate with the Royal Commission and see whether, notwithstanding the protest made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. H. H. Fowler), they are willing to undertake this inquiry. If they are not I will undertake that the matter shall be inquired into further, although not by a Committee of this House.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I am sure the Committee will recognize that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown himself ready to meet the case of the writers in all fairness. I do not myself see that under the circumstances he could have done very much more than he has done. I only desire in asking leave to withdraw my Motion for a re-

duction of the Vote, to draw attention to one sentence in this Minute which is pregnant with importance. It says that copyists who may be called upon to retire with a view to reducing the number on the Register, or for any other cause than that of misconduct or refusal to serve, shall receive a gratuity calculated in the manner aforesaid. That contemplates the compulsory retirement of some of these men. They are to receive a gratuity, and are to be sent about their business. That is the way I read it, and that is the way the copyists read it. I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in considering this matter, he will take care that those who are threatened with dismissal shall be reinstated. With regard to Parliamentary pressure being put upon Members by Civil Service clerks who are voters, I may say I do not believe that amongst my constituents in East Donegal there is a single Civil Service clerk.

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY (Lancashire, N., Blackpool): I am sorry I was not in my place during the earlier part of the discussion, for I understand that reference has been made to the Commission of which I am Chairman. It is no doubt true that many Members of that Commission have viewed with astonishment, and perhaps even with despair, the fact that they find themselves obliged to face, amongst many other things, this difficult question of the Civil Service writers. In justice to the Commission, I must say that in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. H. H. Fowler) and my right hon. Friend on this side of the House (Mr. Selater-Booth), they did to-day consider the question of the writers attached to a particular department. I do not know what we may be able to report to the House as the result of the first part of the inquiry we are making, but undoubtedly we did deal with the writers of one department, which, as one of the clerical departments of the State, we are now examining. It was our duty according to the Reference to us to consider the question of the writers as much as any other portion—I will not say of the clerical establishments, because the writers are not technically a part of the clerical establishments of the country—but of the Civil Service. I do not know whether ultimately the Commission may not

have to make some application in regard to this question, but, undoubtedly, we have, up to now, had under our consideration certain grievances of clerks connected with one of the public offices. We did think it necessary to summon before us gentlemen representing writers attached to the War Office. We heard from them some evidence in connection with the special grievance they allege they are suffering under. I wish to assure the Government and the Committee that whatever ultimately we may think it our duty to represent, as to the magnitude of the inquiry we have begun to conduct, we have at all events so far acted up to the belief that the terms of our Reference do not prevent us from considering the case of the writers.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(9.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payments during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Local Government Board, including various Grants in Aid of Local Taxation.”

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I see that this is a charge for medical inspection in cholera districts, and I should like to know how it has arisen?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): In 1884, certain expenses were incurred in connection with the inspection of some of our ports in order to prevent the importation of cholera. In 1885 again it became apparent that there was considerable danger of cholera spreading through the country; and it was proposed by the Local Government Board that the inspection which had been confined to the ports should be extended to inland towns and sanitary areas, where it was believed that the sanitary arrangements were of such a character, that if cholera were introduced it would produce great disaster. We consented to five extra medical inspectors being appointed to go round and inspect the sanitary arrangements of all the sanitary areas throughout the Kingdom. It was found on investigation that no less a number than 500 of these sanitary areas required to be inspected. The Sanitary Authorities gladly welcomed the inspectors from the

Local Government Board, and were ready to adopt the precautions which the experience of these inspectors enabled them to make. I think that the result has been in every way satisfactory. Well, Sir, these inspectors were appointed for a year. That year expired in February, 1886. By that time the whole number of areas had not been investigated or visited, and a further application was made by the Local Government Board to the Treasury to sanction the employment of the inspectors for a further period of six months. When that period expired it was found that there were still some further districts to be examined, and I made application to the Treasury for a certain extension of time which, I said, should not go beyond the 31st of last December. The Treasury consented, and by the 30th of November the whole of the areas had been visited and everything which it was thought necessary to do was done. The whole matter is now closed. I am satisfied that the visitations, and everything that has been done, has been fraught with advantages, not merely of a temporary, but of a permanently beneficial kind. Many improvements have been adopted in consequence of the advice given by our inspectors to Local Authorities regarding the sanitary condition of the districts.

COLONEL NOLAN: Did the inspection include Ireland?

MR. RITCHIE: No; it did not extend to Ireland. The total amount expended in the present year has been £4,400, in 1886 it was over £6,000, and in 1885 £1,000. The amount altogether is over £11,000. It has not been necessary for the Local Government Board to ask the House of Commons for the whole amount of this £4,400 for the present year, for there have been sufficient funds remaining in their hands in connection with other subjects under the Local Government Board's Vote to enable them to meet the expenditure.

COLONEL NOLAN: Has the inspection been confined to Great Britain, or was Ireland included? Was there a parallel inquiry for Ireland?

MR. RITCHIE: The area of the jurisdiction of the Local Government Board over which these inspectors were sent is confined entirely to England.

COLONEL NOLAN: And Scotland?

MR. RITCHIE: No. The Local Government Board of Ireland, I may say,

is entirely under the control of the Irish Office.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The statement made by the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is extremely interesting; but what I complain of is that this inquiry should have been altogether confined to England, as if England is the only part of the United Kingdom that is ever likely to be attacked with cholera. It is remarkable that you should spend £1,800 on the sanitary arrangements of England out of the Imperial funds whilst leaving the localities in Ireland to bear the expenditure themselves. Why should that be? Why should we in Ireland pay for inspection out of our own pockets? Whenever in England you have cargoes coming into your ports from foreign countries where cholera may exist, you have inspectors and doctors to see that no infectious diseases are imported by means of rags or things of that kind. You have made this an Imperial matter, as one can see from the Estimate. In Ireland, however, we have had to put our hands into our own pockets in order to prevent infection reaching us. The soul or body of an Irishman is no better than that of an Englishman, and we, therefore, cannot understand why it should not be protected in the usual way out of the Imperial funds. In this matter you give us a kind of Home Rule that we cannot understand. The whole question of the prevention of the importation of contagious diseases no doubt is one of considerable interest. No doubt you have in England very extensive ports. No doubt it was necessary to incur great expense at Hull, seeing that that is a port very near Germany, whence it was feared that cholera might come; but in Ireland we also have ports where diseases might be brought in, and why should we have to pay for preventing them from being brought in out of our own pockets? I would like to ask the Irish Secretary as to ports like Derry, Belfast, and Dublin; whether infection might not have been brought in there if it had not been for the precautions taken by local doctors? Seeing that £1,800 has been expended in England, I should say that about £600 has been spent in Ireland, and I would ask whether the local rates of Ireland will be disembarassed to that extent?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): This item in the Estimate is for inspectors who have been appointed to keep out infectious diseases from abroad. The importation of cholera was principally feared from Spain, and I imagine the inspection would mainly take place at those English ports trading with Spain and the South of England. If any Irish port was similarly situated, and had a similar claim, no doubt the cost of inspection there would fall on the Imperial funds. As the hon. Member has called my attention to the subject, I will make a point of inquiring into it, and will do my best to see that the charge is fairly distributed.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): As a Dublin trader, I would point out that we have direct trading communication with Spain. Scarcely a day passes that some Spanish vessel does not enter the port of Dublin. I am aware, as a Member of the Dublin Corporation, that we made an order last year, when the introduction of cholera was feared, for the expenditure of a certain sum out of our local means, to meet the danger that threatened us. I cannot understand, therefore, why, when these expenses for inspection in England are paid out of the general fund of the Empire, we in Ireland should be called on to pay them out of our own resources. I consider we have a just and proper claim upon the Government in this matter, and the right hon. Gentleman said that if we could show that we had that he would see that it was satisfied.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was present during a great part of the speech of the President of the Local Government Board. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board stated that the inspection was extended from the ports to the inland areas. The Chief Secretary's promise, however, only covers ports. Will he extend it to inland places? I would point out to him that Ireland is just as susceptible to cholera epidemics as England, and that in 1849, when cholera swept over Europe, Ireland was severely visited.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): There is a Question I should like to put to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Sir

Michael Hicks-Beach) on this subject, and I trust he will afford me a satisfactory answer. In many of the Irish ports we went, owing to the recommendations of the doctors, to considerable expense, such as was never deemed necessary before, in order to prevent the introduction or the spread of cholera. I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, if we are able to lay before him a satisfactory explanation of the expenditure we have thus been put to in Ireland, in the shape of doctors' fees, and also in the erection of a hospital for the purpose of arresting the advance of cholera, he will give the matter his best consideration, in order that we may be reimbursed the amount we have been called upon to pay?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH): I have only to say, in reply to the hon. Member, that the expense to which he refers is one that is common to both England and Ireland.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the expenditure which has been referred to was also incurred by us in Scotland. We there took all due precautions against the introduction of disease, by means of the rags brought over from the Continent, for the use of the large paper works; and as a good deal of expense was thrown upon us in that way, I should be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the event of any allowance being made, such as is asked for by the Irish Members, Scotland will not also have her share conceded?

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): It would be a very easy matter to reduce the claim made in respect of the expenditure incurred by Ireland, on account of precautions against the introduction of cholera, to pounds, shillings, and pence. I think it will be generally admitted that it is one of the first cares of every Government to take precautionary measures against the introduction or spread of any epidemic disease like that of cholera; and when one portion of Her Majesty's Dominions is put to a large expenditure on this head, and that expenditure is charged on the Imperial Exchequer, I contend that the other portions of Her Majesty's Dominions have a right to take exception to anything which has even the semblance of

favouritism. I may inform the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant that last year the Corporation of Cork, to which body I have the honour to belong, had under its careful consideration the precautions necessary to be taken for the purpose of preventing the introduction of cholera. This matter engaged the attention of that body for three or four successive meetings, the point they had to consider being, how they could take the most effective steps not only to prevent the possibility of the appearance of the disease, but also to prevent its spread in the country, should it unfortunately gain admission to our coasts. The Sanitary Authorities of the City of Cork took all the measures they deemed most advisable under the circumstances. I may remind the Committee that the Port of Cork, in the same way as many of the English ports, has a considerable trade not only with all the European ports, but with all the ports of the civilized world. In the prosecution of this trade, Spanish vessels and vessels from all those countries in which cholera did prevail, came into Cork Harbour, and I may state that I have myself frequently seen the yellow quarantine flag hoisted upon foreign vessels coming into the Port of Cork. My idea was that there might be cases of fever or small-pox or some other infectious disease on board, but the doctors who went on board were charged with the duty of seeing that there were no cases of cholera, and they were paid by the Local Authority. In fact every possible precaution that could be taken was taken by the Cork Sanitary Authorities to prevent the possibility of the outbreak of cholera or any other infectious disease. We paid all the expenses thus incurred out of our own pockets, and yet we are now asked to contribute towards the cost of the precautionary measures taken by England. I think that this is a matter which the Irish Representatives have a right to question and take objection to. This country is a far richer country than Ireland, and ought to pay the expense of whatever measures it may have been called upon to take with the view of preventing the introduction of cholera or any other epidemic disease.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am

afraid from what has fallen from hon. Members who have just spoken that I have not made myself fully understood in the remarks I have previously offered to the Committee. It would appear from the observations to which we have recently listened, that hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House are of opinion that Her Majesty's Government have undertaken in England to perform certain duties which in Ireland are performed by the Local Authorities. [An hon. MEMBER: And in Scotland.] In England and Scotland there is a duty imposed on the Local Authorities as to the performance of those functions which hon. Members representing Irish constituencies have said are in that country performed by the Local Authorities—that is to say, it is the duty of the Local Authorities to provide hospitals and to take all necessary precautions against the importation of cholera or any other epidemic disease. What has in reality been done is that certain medical inspectors were temporarily engaged by us for the purpose of going over the country and advising with the Local Authorities as to the best means by which the importation and spread of disease might be prevented. This is what we have done and we have not gone beyond it. The Imperial funds at the disposal of Parliament are not in any way called upon to contribute towards the expense of performing duties which properly devolve upon the Local Authorities in England as well as in Scotland and Ireland.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: There is no corresponding Vote for Ireland.

Mr. RITCHIE: There is no corresponding Vote for Ireland. Hon. Members need reminding how this question arose. There was a good deal of cholera in Spain and in the South of Europe in places whose ports were, by means of their shipping, in very direct communication with our British ports; and looking to the fact that great danger was thus created with regard to the importation of that disease, especially in the case of some of our largest English ports, Her Majesty's Government thought it necessary to send inspectors to our different seaports with a view of seeing what course the Local Authorities were about to pursue in order to prevent the importation of disease. In the course of their investi-

gations it became apparent to those medical inspectors that it was desirable to extend the inspection in which they were engaged to the inland towns. I can only assume, as the reason why this inspection was not extended to Ireland, that the Irish authorities considered that the sanitary condition of the ports and inland towns of that country was of a satisfactory nature, and that it was, therefore, unnecessary to take that course. I may, however, say that there is no longer any necessity for the continuance of the expenditure thus necessitated. The whole of it ceased on the 30th of November, and there is no intention on the part of the Local Government Board to go into further expenditure in connection with that matter.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to point out to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) that what the Irish Representatives complain of is that we in Ireland have not had the inspection he refers to. We do not want the Local Government Board to go on with the inspection now; but I think the right hon. Gentleman can hardly say that we are so well off in Ireland that there is no chance of our having any disease imported there. Therefore, I do not think that Ireland ought to have been left out in the cold when measures of inspection were taken with regard to England. Medical advice has its value, and, of course, has to be paid for, and it does not seem to be fair that a distinction should be made between the two countries.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to offer a few words with regard to this Vote, in reply to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie). I think we perfectly understand the case which he has put before the Committee; but what we complain of is the unequal treatment that has been dealt out to the ports of England and Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has stated that he will cause inquiries to be made; but I am somewhat astonished to find that the right hon. Gentleman, who has twice occupied the position of Chief Secretary, should stand in need of such an immense amount of inquiry in order to make himself

acquainted with the state of the facts in regard to the sanitary condition and arrangements of Ireland. Surely, it ought not to be necessary that Irish Members should stand up in their places in this House for the purpose of informing the right hon. Gentleman that there is a trade going on between the ports of Ireland and those of foreign countries by means of which cholera or other diseases of an epidemic character might be imported. It has been stated that this is so with regard to the Ports of Dublin, Cork, and Waterford; and, further, that there is no port in the kingdom which has a more direct connection with the ports of Europe than the Port of Cork. It is also a well-known fact, and ought to be known to the Chief Secretary, that every Poor Law Union in County Cork has had to contribute to the cost of the intercepting hospital established in the Port of Cork. I was serving as a member of the Harbour Board of that port at the time the cholera epidemic broke out on the Continent, and I know that we took all possible precautions to prevent the importation of that disease. The Harbour Commissioners trapped up all the sewers leading from the City of Cork to the river, and took every conceivable measure to prevent the admission or spread of cholera, so far as might be, by any internal arrangements of a sanitary character. They also went to the expense of erecting an intercepting hospital, and they advised the medical inspectors of the port to quarantine all vessels coming from infected ports. What we have to complain of is that we had no advice from the medical inspectors, who, as stated by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, were appointed in England for Imperial purposes. We never saw the face of one of those men in Ireland, and I say that we have every right to object to this unequal treatment. If we in Cork are to be subject to the same laws, rules, and regulations that are applied for Imperial purposes to all other large ports with regard to the preservation of health and the prevention of the importation of epidemic disease, we say we are in duty bound to complain of the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government; and that we are acting within our just rights in criticising this Vote, and pointing out that

Mr. Ritchie

in future, whenever it may be deemed necessary to ask for additional grants of money of this nature, the Government should take good care to apply to the ports of Ireland, and its sanitary condition generally, the same principles as are applied to the ports of this country.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I do not see that there is any unequal treatment. Speaking simply from my own knowledge, I may state that the medical inspectors appointed by the Local Government Board gave every possible assistance and advice to the Boards of Guardians; and, if there was need in England for additional medical advice which was not deemed requisite in Ireland, the fact is one which only shows that the Local Government system in Ireland in this particular respect is better than that of England.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I think some Members of the Government ought to explain, before we agree to this Vote, how it is that this unequal incidence of charge has been brought about; because, as it now stands, it will be seen that the English Local Government Board take care that in regard to England the Imperial resources should be called upon to pay the local expenditure incurred in this matter, while the Local Government of Ireland have made no effort to secure for that country a similar result. This is a sufficient proof that the Local Government Board of Ireland is not so fully alive to the performance of its duties as that of England. It is to me a surprising fact that a sum so large as £9,867 should be asked for from the Imperial Exchequer for a national object in England, and that the Irish taxpayers, who have had no similar consideration, should be called upon to contribute their quota without any chance of obtaining the slightest relief. We are told by an hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Captain Colomb) that there is no unequal treatment here. It is useless to argue with any hon. Gentleman who is so absolutely blind to the facts as to make such an assertion. The case before the Committee is one in which it is clearly shown that the Imperial funds have been resorted to to the extent of nearly £10,000 for the purpose of defraying certain expenses incurred in England; while in Ireland, although expense has had to be incurred for similar objects,

the amount has to be paid locally, and the Imperial Exchequer is allowed to go scot-free. I should like to be informed by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary why it is that no steps have been taken by the Local Government Board in Ireland on this question?

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.): I think the Irish Representatives have a right to demand of the Government an explanation of the fact that whereas in England, where you have Local Authorities possessing greater powers than similar Bodies in Ireland, it has been deemed necessary to supplement their action by the appointment of special medical inspectors in order to deal with a dangerous question; in Ireland, where exceptional measures have also had to be taken, the whole of the expense has been left to be borne by the Local Authorities. It occurs to me that the matter would be fairly met if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary would promise the Irish Members that any additional expenditure incurred by the Local Authorities of Ireland with a view of meeting the danger arising from the possible importation of cholera, should be refunded to them from the Imperial Exchequer. In order to bring the matter to a test I will move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £800, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service."—(Mr. Barry.)

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): I am somewhat surprised that there has been no answer made to the appeal put forward on behalf of Scotland in regard to this matter by the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont). I hardly think it is quite fair to Scotland, that when such a point has been put by one of the Scottish Representatives, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) should treat it with contempt and refuse to say a word. I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the question we are now discussing in reference to Ireland has equal force in its application to Scotland, and I hope he will condescend to state to the House the reason why similar precautions to those taken in England were not adopted in regard to the Scotch ports.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): In Scotland, we have Local Authorities, who deal with these ques-

tions in their own districts; and we have in Scotland, a Board of Supervision, which supervises the action of all those Authorities. In Scotland, the Local Authorities pay all the local expenses, and the Imperial Government pays the expense of the Board of Supervision for supervising the Local Authorities. In regard to the apprehensions aroused as to the importation of cholera, the Board of Supervision took what steps were necessary with a view to preventing the admission of that disease; and, if additional expense were thereby incurred, it would be borne by the Imperial Exchequer. In England, there are Local Boards which are equally bound to deal with these matters in their different districts. Those Local Boards, again, are supervised by the Local Government Board, and any additional charges it has had to incur in preventing the importation of cholera must be paid out of the Imperial Exchequer. In England, what was done was this—the Local Government Board took special precautions in order to ensure that the Local Authorities were performing their duty in regard to this important matter. It seems that the action thus taken was deemed necessary in England and was not deemed necessary in Scotland or Ireland, so that no extra expense is thrown on the Imperial Exchequer in respect to those latter countries.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I can assure the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Anderson), and the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont), that I have not intended any discourtesy to Scotland. After all, this question—as I think I shall be able, in a very few words, to show the Committee—is not one that ought to detain us for a single moment longer. The supervision of the Local Authorities in England is performed by the Local Government Board, and in Scotland the corresponding body is the Board of Supervision, while in Ireland there is the Local Government Board for that country. Each of these bodies is responsible to its own country for the manner in which it discharges its functions. It is assumed that in view of the possible advent of cholera, each took proper precautions. I know that the Scotch Board of Supervision took precautions; that the English Local Government Board, when I was in it, like-

wise took the precautions which my right hon. Friend the present President of that Board (Mr. Ritchie) has described; and also that precautions were taken by the Local Government Board of Ireland. But the whole of the danger from cholera which then existed is now over; it has passed away. Experience has shown that each of the Boards has done its duty admirably and with complete efficiency; and how either Ireland or Scotland can consider itself aggrieved that more money has not been expended in those parts of the kingdom in addition to what was spent in England, I am at a total loss to discover. I hope my Scotch Friends will understand that if a Supplementary Vote is not asked for Scotland, it is not because the Board of Supervision in Scotland has in any respect failed in its duty; and I doubt not a similar statement can be made with regard to the Local Government Board of Ireland.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I trust that my hon. Friend the Member for South Wexford (Mr. Barry) will not persist in the Amendment he has moved. I have no doubt he is quite right in the complaint that the precautions taken in England were not also taken in Ireland; but I would point out to him that if this Amendment were carried, the implication would be that precautions ought not to have been taken either in England or Ireland. I trust that one of the results of this debate will be that if, in the future, the cholera epidemic should threaten the United Kingdom once more, all necessary precautions will be taken in England, Scotland, and Ireland. At the same time, I do not think we should teach the lesson that the amount spent—and, I think, legitimately spent—in England should be reduced. I hope, therefore, my hon. Friend will be satisfied with the debate that has taken place, and will be induced to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has spoken as if cholera always broke out at the commencement of the financial year; but I think a little reflection will convince him that that epidemic is a visitor that never waits for any particular season. The point, however, before the Committee is this—in England you have incurred the expenses

necessary to prevent the importation of cholera, and have charged them on the Imperial Revenue; in Ireland we have incurred similar expenses, and have had to meet them ourselves. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has said he will look into the matter; but what will he do when he has looked into it? We have had to incur these expenses in Ireland; and why? Because circulars were issued by the Local Government Board, of which the right hon. Gentleman is the head, pointing out the necessity of incurring them; and whereas we in Ireland are called on to defray the charge locally, in the case of England the Imperial Exchequer is to be burdened with the expenditure. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will see this distinction, and that he will be prepared to grant, in the case of Ireland, the amount of the charge which in England is made an Imperial one.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) will be able to make a statement to the Committee such as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has made—namely, that he believes the Local Government Board in Ireland has done its duty. I should also like to hear from him a reply to my statement as to Dublin being in direct and almost daily communication with the ports of Spain from which the importation of cholera might have been apprehended. I know that in my own case weekly consignments are received from Spain, and one of these is an article which is said to be very likely to be the medium of introducing that epidemic—I allude to the consignment of raisins. I believe it is in the raisin-growing districts that cholera generally prevails. I should like to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether he will do the same justice to the Port of Dublin as he has done to the ports of England?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The point I wished to put before the Committee was the bearing of this matter upon the Vote. I understand the Local Government Board in 1885-6 found it necessary to incur expense in the appointment of additional inspectors to prevent the importation of cholera from abroad. It was not found

necessary to do that in Ireland. [An hon. MEMBER: Why?] I will tell the hon. Gentleman who asks why. The Irish Local Government Board have sufficient assistance at present to enable them to do this work without appointing additional medical officers. [*Cries of "No, no!"*] Well, the proof of the pudding, after all, is in the eating—the cholera did not reach the shores of Ireland in 1885-6. All I can say is this—that I will make inquiries at the Irish Government Board, and if it can be shown to me that the Local Authorities in Ireland incurred any expense in this matter of a kind similar to that for which this Vote is asked, I will press upon my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) the desirability of proposing a Vote to recoup them. Further, if there is an insufficiency of medical inspection in connection with the Irish Local Government Board to prevent the importation of cholera or other infectious diseases from the South of Europe, I will see that the evil is rectified before any possible opportunity can arise for such inspection being required.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.): After the statement we have heard from the Government, I will withdraw my Amendment. In this country the prospect of an epidemic of cholera was greatly feared as a national danger, and the Government took proper steps to meet it; but in Ireland the Local Government Board went on in their usual happy-go-lucky way. If the cholera came, well and good. [*Laughter.*] Yes, well and good; that was the position they took up. No exceptional precautions were taken by the Irish Local Government Board for dealing with this great danger. However, after the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) I will withdraw my Motion.

MR. E. R. RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I think we Scotch Members ought to have the same promise from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour). I do not think the hon. Gentleman above me, who was so ill satisfied with the operations of the Local Government Board in Ireland, has satisfied the Scotch Members that so far as Scotland is concerned he has any reason for envy.

There appears to be a sort of auction going on between the two Secretaries. After what the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has said, I think we ought to have an assurance that some inquiry will be made in Scotland; and that if it is found that the Local Authorities have incurred expense in this sanitary inspection for the prevention of cholera, steps will be taken to recoup them from the Imperial Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman does not seem to have any very distinct notion of what has been done. My own impression is that the system that has been adopted has been too happy-go-lucky—to quote the words of the hon. Member for South Wexford (Mr. Barry). At any rate, if there has been expense incurred in Scotland, there should be a special Vote for that country as well as for England and Ireland.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I shall do my best to make any expenditure which, as he says, ought to fall on the Imperial funds, fall on these funds.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I should like the pledge of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) not to be limited to the question which I think is in his mind—namely, to medical inspection. The Irish Local Government Board have officials living in Dublin—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is now travelling outside this Vote in discussing the organization of medical inspection in Ireland.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I did not intend to do that, Sir. All I wished to do was to correct a mistake made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, who appears to think that the medical inspection in Ireland is sufficient and capable of discharging all the duties that the medical inspection discharges in England. I think that if expense has been incurred through the Local Government Board communicating with the medical practitioners and the Local Authorities asking them to take precautions, that expense should be included in the finance of the right hon. Gentleman.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

MR. E. R. Russell

(10.) £107, Supplementary, Secretary for Scotland's Office.

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(11.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £287, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and the incidental Expenses of the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland.”

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This is a Vote for the cost of an official assignee. There was a gentleman who was an official assignee to the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland some years ago whose proceedings appeared to be not very justifiable. I moved for a return showing the position in which we stood in regard to different bankrupt estates which came under the influence of that gentleman. That Return was furnished and is in the library of the House, though it was never printed. A short time after that gentleman had furnished that Return, after he had had time to arrange matters for himself, he disappeared. At any rate, a considerable investigation of the accounts of assignees in bankruptcy has taken place principally by reason of the defalcations of this particular assignee. In examining how matters stood, a certain number of gentlemen were put on the accounts of this official assignee. I find there were no less than four gentlemen drafted from the Paymaster-General's Office in connection with this service. Another gentleman was taken from the Public Works Office, and also employed in the examination of these accounts; and then there are two officials of the Court of Bankruptcy itself, who have received several additions to their salaries in connection with the same work. Now, I notice that this Vote is worded in a very peculiar manner. At the bottom set forth as the details of the charge are two items. The first is “the excess of indemnity ordered by the Court over the amount of the sub-head.” I doubt if there is any non-official Member of the House who has the least idea what is meant by these words. What “excess of indemnity” is there, what “indemnity” is it, and why was it “ordered by the Court?” It is an item of £307, and from that is deducted £20, being savings

under other sub-heads. Though I have a suspicion of what this means, I should be unable to explain my idea of it clearly by means of the materials set forth here. I must, therefore, ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), whom I presume is responsible for this Vote, what is the meaning of this phrase? I should like also to ask what was the nature of the investigation which caused such an upset in connection with the official assignees in Dublin. How many gentlemen were employed to audit the accounts?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I think I can explain how this Vote came to be asked for at all. The hon. Gentleman is no doubt aware that by Act of Parliament the Court is empowered to pay official assignees for expenses incurred by them in their official capacity. Sums have accordingly been paid in this way on four occasions—in 1877-78 £144 9s. 3d. was paid; in 1880-81 £60 8s. 3d. was paid; in 1881-82, £89 19s. 3d.; and in 1884-85, £384 9s. 10d. The hon. Gentleman will see that it must be impossible beforehand to make an accurate estimate of what the charge may be. A nominal sum was taken in the General Estimate, the actual sum paid is now asked for.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): Following the example of my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor), I also moved for a Return which is not printed yet, but which will be in the hands of hon. Members by the end of the week. I moved for a Return of the Treasury Report on the accounts of the late official assignee—Charles Henry James—who became a defaulter. We have had two assignees connected with our Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland. One of them has, I believe, performed his duties with sufficient carefulness and attention, and the other has acted as a defaulter in the most outrageous manner. His defalcations will appear in the Report which will be issued to the hon. Members of this House in the course of the week, and they will involve revelations of an official nature such as have never before, perhaps, come under the notice of this House and this Committee. The defalcations in a comparatively small office amount to over £10,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not understand how this matter is connected with the particular Vote under discussion. The real question that can be discussed under this Vote is the payment of this so-called indemnity to the official trustees.

MR. P. McDONALD: I understood that under the sub-head B—the second sub-head—official assignees £287, original Estimate £50; total, £337—my remarks were perfectly pertinent.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman will observe in a foot-note to the effect that it is an indemnity ordered by the Court for the payment of official assignees. It is that, and that only, that can be discussed.

MR. P. McDONALD: Am I to understand, Sir, that this excess of indemnity is not for the purpose of making good the deficiencies arising from the defalcations in question?

THE CHAIRMAN: It has no reference to defalcations.

MR. P. McDONALD: Then I am not permitted to refer to this.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I would ask whether this indemnity is not to cover certain costs—the costs of the official assignees, as shown in large letters opposite sub-head B? Were these costs not incurred on account of non-payment of certain dividends? Whether the non-payment of these dividends is or is not due to defalcations of the assignee in question; will the Secretary to the Treasury commit himself to the statement that there were no costs incurred under sub-head B in either the Supplementary Vote or the Vote to which that is a supplement, which arose by reason of the defalcations of the official assignee?

MR. JACKSON: I believe I am perfectly justified in answering that these items have not arisen by reason of such defalcations.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Perhaps this official assignee has been more sinned against than sinning. In my opinion this Vote for official assignees is the cause of all the mistakes that have arisen in the Department. This is an account that is presented annually to Parliament. It should be certified by the Chief Registrar to the Court, and there should be an auditor appointed to facilitate the work. What are the duties of the official assignee? They are not

stated. The gentleman who is the subject of so much attack at the present time, who is alleged to have run away from his position—and that gentleman, I believe, did so—leaving thousands of pounds behind him in the bank that he might have taken, does not appear to have been actuated by a guilty intent. The fault in regard to what occurred does not rest so much with him as with the system. We should insist that the accounts these gentlemen present to Parliament are of a really satisfactory and searching character. In voting money for these official assignees we have not the assurance we ought to have that everything is regular in the office. I do not think everything is regular in the office at the present time. These gentlemen do not perform the duties they ought to perform. In my judgment this Vote is wholly unsatisfactory, unless we are assured that the accounts presented will be checked by some other competent authority, as they are not at the present time. It is my intention to raise the whole question upon the Irish Judicature Bill, in which the expenses of one Judge are provided for. But here you have an additional Vote of £278 as excess of indemnity. I really do not understand the explanation which has been given by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) with regard to the indemnity. I maintain that no matter how efficient the official assignee is, it is absolutely necessary that his report should be checked by the Chief Registrar. This official ought to certify that he had gone over the report and ought to vouch for its accuracy. If there had been such a supervision hitherto you would not have had such unfortunate defalcations as in the case of Mr. James. I have inquired into these defalcations, and I consider that it is the system that is at fault. I am certainly wholly at a loss to understand why we should now pay £287 for the cost of the official assignee. My knowledge may be at fault; but the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is altogether unintelligible to me.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): May I ask why these costs are not paid out of the unpaid dividends in the hands of the Commissioners of the National Debt? Why should this ap-

pear as a charge against the Exchequer?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin, University): I think I am able to explain that in a few words. Up to the year 1877 the unpaid dividends were under the control of the Bankruptcy Court, subject to charges of this character; but in that year the amount was transferred to the Commissioners of the National Debt, and the Statute on authorising such transfer provided that for the future these charges should be defrayed by monies to be voted by Parliament. This Vote is asked for in pursuance of this provision.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Am I to understand that this sum which is now to be voted will hereafter be covered by the Commissioners of the National Debt: that it is the intention of Her Majesty's present Administration to bring in a Bill to secure the repayment from the National Debt Commissioners of the sums which are voted either in the ordinary or Supplementary Estimates on this account?

MR. HOLMES: The country thought the National Debt Commissioners received the benefit of the unclaimed dividends; and this amount cannot be recovered from that Fund.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman state what is the amount thus transferred to the National Debt Commissioners under the head of "Unpaid Dividend Account?"

MR. HOLMES: I cannot say.

MR. P. Mc DONALD (Sligo, N.): It is curious this indemnity was not hitherto opposed in any Returns. Will this item, or an item similar to it, be continued in future Estimates? Is it a fact that it is not intended to cover the expenses of an inquiry into the so-called defalcations of this official assignee, and also into the manner in which the Bank of Ireland has failed to perform its duty? It is alleged that this official assignee was permitted to transfer to his own banking account the money lodged in the Bank of Ireland for the purpose of paying these dividends. I should like to know from the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Holmes) whether the statements I now make are founded upon fact.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I submit that a proper amount of illumination has not been thrown on this matter by the Members of the Treasury Bench. This is a matter which should be made plain to what is called the meanest intelligence. Does no one understand this Vote? I cannot understand either the Vote itself or the explanation of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson). Will someone on the Treasury Bench tell us how often in previous years this Vote has been put down, and why it is necessary now? It is not sufficient for the Government to say that because the money is wanted they must have it. The Irish Court of Bankruptcy has been in operation since 1857—for 30 years—and now you put down a Vote of £287 for “excess of indemnity ordered by the Court over amount of the sub-head (costs of official assignees).” This unfortunate Mr. James has been much attacked, but I am not going to attack him, though he is a Tory of the Tories. It is the system under which he served which ought to be attacked. Am I to be told that it is because this unfortunate Mr. James fled that this £287 is required? That is a point which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has not explained. You have an annual—a certain—Vote in connection with the Irish Bankruptcy Act; it is, in fact, £10,000 odd. What has occurred in 1886-7 to require this amount? The Irish Bankruptcy Act has been in process of operation for 30 years; why is it that in this particular financial year you want the sum of £287? It is supposed to be wanted on account of the flight of Mr. James. But Mr. James came back with his pockets full of Bank of England notes. He had no dishonest intentions.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already said that it is totally irrelevant to discuss the case of Mr. James.

MR. O’HEA (Donegal, W.): Undoubtedly there has been much mismanagement with regard to the affairs of the Irish Bankruptcy Court, and it is only by a debate like this that the management can be brought to light. Whatever may be said about Mr. James, there has been, if not great dereliction of duty, at any rate a large amount of supineness in bankruptcy management.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not raised in any way under this Vote.

MR. O’HEA: May I point out that under the Bankruptcy Act of 1857 it is incumbent upon the Court to audit the accounts of the official assignee. Have we anything to show that there was an audit of the accounts of the official assignee?

THE CHAIRMAN: This Vote has no relation to any defalcations on the part of the official assignee. This is a payment made under statute by way of indemnity for the transfer of unpaid dividends.

MR. O’HEA: I was coming to that point, Mr. Courtney. With respect to unclaimed dividends, what is the duty of the official assignee? The Act provides that “If he shall refuse to pay dividends the Court may order payment with interest, and may also order payment of the costs of the application.” I do not wish to encroach unnecessarily upon the time of the Committee, but I desire to say that when a matter like this does come up for discussion, we are entitled to ask in the felicitous language of my hon. Friend the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), that some illumination should be thrown upon the general bankruptcy management. I certainly shall enter fully into this and other matters when the Irish Judicature Bill is brought up.

MR. J. F. X. O’BRIEN (Mayo, S.): It is really the want of an explanation of these accounts that is responsible for the present waste of time. We have been for many hours discussing a Vote—Supplementary Votes—but nine-tenths of the time would have been saved had we had a few words of explicit explanation. We are asked to pass this Vote without knowing anything about it; we are asked to pass it simply upon the unsatisfactory statement of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. If the hon. Gentleman would explain the Vote even now he would prevent any further waste of time.

MR. O’DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I should like to know whether these costs are the result of an action taken against the official assignee, or of an action which has failed, taken by the official assignee. It is quite plain that the want of light which has been complained of arises from the centralization of the bankruptcy jurisdiction in Dublin. Successive Governments have expressed themselves strongly upon the necessity

of Local Courts; and I am sure that if there were Local Courts dividends would not go so much astray.

MR. HOLMES: I suppose hon. Members are aware that in winding up an estate in bankruptcy, it frequently happens that certain dividends are unpaid. They may not be claimed for a number of years, and then a claim may be made against the official assignee, who may contest it, and be put to costs which he would have to pay. On four occasions since 1877 precisely similar Votes to the present one have been passed by the House.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It does not follow that the Vote is just because a similar Vote has been passed in previous years. The 193rd section of the Bankruptcy Act of 1857 provides that—

“No action for any dividend shall be brought against any assignee; but if the assignee shall refuse to pay any such dividend the Court may order payment thereof, with interest for the time it shall have been withheld;”

and it may also order the payment of the costs of the application; therefore the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Holmes) has gone a little astray if he thinks that these were costs incurred against the official assignee. I am afraid there is not very much more information upon the Treasury Bench in regard to matter than there is upon these Benches. It is clear, at any rate, that there was a considerable sum of money which belonged to nobody except certain bankrupts, which sum of money the Commissioners of the National Debt had paid over to them under Act of Parliament. That is done, and we cannot quarrel with it; but from that fund so transferred have been payable, under the Irish Judicature Act of 1877, certain charges on account of costs. Those payments are no longer made. The charges are thrown—I do not know upon what authority or under what Act—upon Votes submitted from time to time irregularly to this House in Committee of Supply. It is clear the charges are made in connection with some *laches* on the part of certain official assignees. If they are not, what on earth are they made for. Certain things have been done which ought not to have been done, and certain things have not been done which ought to have been done. These costs have now to be defrayed, and a Vote is submitted ac-

Mr. O'Doherty

cordingly. What we want to know, and what I would ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, is what are the shortcomings in respect of which these legal proceedings have been taken—proceedings which have resulted in these legal expenses being payable at the expense of the public taxpayer?

MR. JACKSON: I can only say, Sir, that I have not been in possession of every detail. I can indeed tell the hon. Gentleman as much as I know, and I have already endeavoured to explain to him how this sum came here for payment. I may further explain that the particular item which is now before the Committee arose upon a particular case of bankruptcy in Ireland, in which the gentleman who was acting as official assignee incurred certain costs.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, North): Who was he?

MR. JACKSON: I may further say that these costs, before they are sanctioned for payment under this Statute, have to be confirmed and approved and ordered by the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland. All that process has been gone through. The Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland made an order that this official assignee was entitled to these costs, and that they were to be paid to him under the section of the Act which directs this to be done. I really am extremely sorry that the hon. Member requires to know the particulars and details of what the official assignee did. I can only give him a general reply upon the matter as it was brought before us, and I really cannot say more, because I do not know the details.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): We must all admire the admirable manner in which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) has endeavoured to reply to all the questions that have been addressed to him. It is impossible to expect him to bear in mind every detail for the whole of the three countries—England, Ireland, and Scotland—though we admire his manner and his desire to give all the information in his power very much. But we do expect that the Irish officers of the Government, who are paid for the purpose, would be in possession of the facts. I do not consider that the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has given us the explanation

which we are entitled to. It is an explanation which is inconsistent with that of the Secretary to the Treasury, and until those two gentlemen can arrive at a mutual understanding as to what the proper explanation is to be the best thing we can do is to postpone the Vote. As I understand the explanation of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, it is a rational one, if I may say so without disrespect to the Irish Attorney General. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury says that this is a Vote ordered for payment in consequence of an order made by the Irish Bankruptcy Judge. But what says the Irish Attorney General? If I understand him aright—far be it from me to say that I am capable of taking in the explanation of any Irish Attorney General—if I understand him aright, his explanation is that there are certain sums payable to certain Commissioners of the National Debt, and that those sums were paid over, and that they, having paid over so much more than they ought to have done, the Commissioners of the National Debt were compelled to cut down this Vote; but that explanation is wholly inconsistent with the explanation of the Secretary to the Treasury; and furthermore, the Irish Attorney General gave an explanation which is totally contrary to the Section of the Irish Bankruptcy Act to which we are referred by the sub-head at the beginning of the Vote for Explanation. That shows a vicious system of putting down the Votes and relying upon the supineness of the Committee to pass them without due and deliberate inquiry. You, Mr. Courtney, are the only Gentleman in this Committee who professes to understand this matter. You, Mr. Courtney, appear in your ruling, at all events, to have started what I may call a working hypothesis, and, grant your hypothesis, your rulings are most admirable. When I contrast your view with the explanations which have been offered from the Treasury Bench I am struck with admiration of the faculty which enables you to gather up two wholly inconsistent explanations and to make your rulings consistent with them. What says the Act of Parliament? The right hon. Gentleman the Irish Attorney General says this is a charge made because of certain charges which fall on the official assignee in the

course of his business; but in the Act it says that an action for any dividend shall be brought against any official assignee, and if the Court shall order payment of such dividend the Court may do so. Therefore, you have it upon this that this is not a Vote in consequence of any defalcation by any assignee, and yet, if I may say so without the smallest disrespect, you have the statement made by the Secretary to the Treasury that this is a Vote in consequence of a defalcation.

MR. JACKSON: No; I did not say so.

MR. T. M. HEALY: This is a Vote because of the particular conduct of some particular official assignee. I asked for the name and the date, but was quite unable to get either. The official assignee is, in some way, left *in nubibus*. He was in default; but we are now told it is not a defalcation.

MR. JACKSON: I never said so.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Really, as I have said before, I think this Committee—or, at least, the Irish Members of it—should treat the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury with the utmost consideration. He is most anxious to give us information, and he has mustered, in every respect, an enormous mass of details, which is the more remarkable and praiseworthy as he is new to Office. He really compels and extorts our admiration. The Chief Secretary for Dun-garvan shakes his head—I really beg the Home Secretary's pardon—I mean the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews). He shakes his head. He seems to know all about it; but he will not get up and say what he thinks. I will give him the explanation of the Irish Attorney General, who says that the default and the costs have to be met. Am I to be told that the Treasury of England has agreed to raise this extraordinary sum, placed upon the Estimates without full explanation? I think that the least we might expect is that the Treasury should give us an explanation which should be consistent; but they have not given us that. They say that this sum has been incurred in consequence of default and in consequence of costs. Who incurred them? What is the date? Let us have some particulars. I am told that Mr. Dening is the official assignee—surely he must have some explanation to offer. So far

we are only told that a certain sum arises in consequence of a default. Let us know the date of it, and when the costs were incurred, and who was the official involved?

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): Notwithstanding the explanation given to us we are still in the dark—indeed, we are more in the dark now than we were before. The right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has given us his explanation, and the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has given us a different one. The Attorney General for Ireland says these costs were incurred in default of the payment of certain dividends. Now, why should costs be incurred in this way? I confess I do not understand that. The Secretary to the Treasury has also given us his explanation. He says the costs arose out of a particular case. He was asked to explain the particular case; but he would not do so, and he leaves the matter in this unintelligible way. We most strongly object to let everything pass here that has been passed by the Judges in Ireland, and we think we are entitled to some explanation.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): It seems to me that an opportunity ought to be taken by the Treasury, when they are going over the accounts of officials in Ireland, to check those accounts. How can we have any confidence in voting money when affairs are managed in this slipshod fashion, and when the sums asked for are increasing year by year, and no attempt is made even to have notice served upon those who are responsible? If the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would give an undertaking that hereafter these orders should be checked, and the costs and expenses checked, there might be some satisfaction in trying to pass these Votes without dispute.

MR. JACKSON: I am sure it is my fault for not having made the matter clear; but really this is a matter in which the Treasury have no power whatever. It is settled by an Act of Parliament that certain costs that are charged from time to time may be brought before the Court in Ireland, and approved by the Court, and then they must be paid. The amount which is now before the Committee has been before the Court, has been approved by

the Court, and has been ordered by the Court to be paid; and, in accordance with the Act of Parliament, we are bound to pass it.

AN hon. MEMBER: Is there no Notice to the Treasury?

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think this matter may be divided under two heads, so far as the power of the Court is concerned. The first is, that where an estate is open, the Court, no doubt, has considerable power to order payment out of the funds in Court. The second power is under the 77th section of the Act of 1872; and, in that case, the Court is empowered, out of unclaimed dividends, to order payment to the official assignee of certain sums. But the order which is used as a justification for this Vote is no order at all, for no power to make such order exists. The Court orders for payment certain sums out of moneys to be provided by Parliament; but the power to make an order is confined to an entirely different fund—the unclaimed dividends. The explanation which has been given is, therefore, not sufficient.

MR. HOLMES: If the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken will refer to the 85th section of the Judicature Act of 1877, he will find that it has transferred that liability to the money provided by Parliament, for the 85th section provides that Government securities must be transferred to the National Debt Commissioners, and all charges upon them, including this charge, shall be taken out of moneys provided by Parliament. The section to which the hon. Gentleman has referred is, no doubt, the section under which the charge was originally made; but, by subsequent legislation, it is transferred from the unclaimed dividend account to the money provided by Parliament.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think, Sir, that it is time we discontinued the discussion; and I, therefore, move that you do report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I really must ask the Committee to finish this Vote. The

most complete information has been given. I am sure hon. Gentlemen opposite misunderstand the fact that this money is required to be paid—is ordered to be paid—by a Court of Law, which has full power to order it, and there is no alternative. I do not say that the House of Commons is absolutely bound to vote the money; but an Act of Parliament provides that it shall be paid out of money to be voted by Parliament. This has been done with official sanction, and we really have no alternative in the matter.

MR. T. M. HEALY: For half an hour we have been asking for some information. We have got various different accounts, and at the last moment we have a totally different explanation given to us, which does throw some little light upon the business. But for half-an-hour we have practically wasted our time, because the Members upon the Treasury Bench cannot agree about the facts. Nobody admits more cheerfully than I do that there has been a complete waste of time, wholly caused by the inability of Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench to agree in their own explanations. They have given a different one every time, and now at the eleventh hour we get an entirely different one from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Irish Attorney General, wholly different from all which have preceded it.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

Resolutions to be reported.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): There are some unopposed Votes which I am sure hon. Gentlemen will not object to dispose of. We will not take any Votes which may reasonably occupy any time. I would not propose to take the Constabulary Vote nor the Irish Education Vote if that is objected to; but there are certain other Votes which are not Votes of any great importance, and which it would be of considerable advantage to take in Committee of Supply to-night. As the Committee, though it has lasted a considerable time, has not obtained much money, I trust it will be willing to go forward for a little while longer.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I have looked through these

Votes for myself, and I am disposed to think that the Vote for the Science and Art Department is not one that is likely to give rise to discussion, but most of the others are likely to lead to debate. There is certainly one on the Paper—the Vote for Lunatics in Scotland—which, probably, will not involve much discussion; but with the exception of, perhaps, one other, I do not think there is a single Vote remaining as to which it will not be necessary to raise discussions.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I hope the Diplomatic Vote will not be taken to-night.

MR. W. H. SMITH: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no Question before the House.

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,560, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the Establishments connected therewith.”

MR. PARNELL (Cork): In reference to the suggestion just made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) that we should take some Votes which may not be objected to, and especially this Science and Art Vote, I would wish to say that I do not think it is fair to other hon. Members of the House, and particularly to absent Members of the House, that we should go on when there is a heavy Vote on the list like the Irish Constabulary Vote, one which, from the nature of the case, is likely to take up a very considerable time, which has been skipped over. I am not complaining of the postponement of that Vote, because it is manifestly too late to take it; but it would not be fair to skip over that Vote, and then proceed to take other Votes when hon. Members who would take an interest in the subsequent Votes would naturally suppose that they would not come on. It was not at all expected that this very Vote for the Science and Art Department would have been reached to-night, and there are circumstances of considerable interest in reference to this Vote which some of my hon. Friends would have liked to have had in hand. We have here a Vote for £10,560 for the

Science and Art Department, and I think it would have been only proper to have heard some statement from the responsible officials in connection with this matter. If there is a responsible Irish official in connection with this Vote—which I very much doubt—I should have liked to have had some explanation of it, especially at a time when the explanation could be given to the Irish public through the Press. This question of Science and Art in Ireland has been one which has been upon the Parliamentary carpet for a great number of years, and we have never been able to get any satisfaction out of the Government in reference thereto. I understand that the whole of the Vote does not apply to Ireland, and in that case it is additionally unfair to British Members who may have been beguiled away by the probability—the certainty, under all the circumstances of the case—that this Vote could not possibly be reached to-night. I put it to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) whether it is fair to hon. Members to take a Vote in which they are most interested, and many of them especially in view of the fact that their absence has been procured by skipping over the Constabulary Vote? I know of no practice which is more objectionable than when, after half-past 12 at night—it is now 10 minutes to 1—a Minister gets up and says—"I will not take any Votes that are strongly objected to, but I will take any Votes that are not objected to." The consequence is that many hon. Members, who have gone away under the idea that Votes in which they are interested cannot possibly be reached, are punished when they come back and find that they have been beguiled and deceived by the Secretary to the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Leader of the House. In the interests of absent Members, I beg to move, Sir, that you do now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—*(Mr. Parnell.)*

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Some of these Votes, at all events, might be taken. I think that the Science and Art Vote is an important Vote, but there might be others. The right hon. Gen-

tleman has undertaken not to take the Constabulary Vote or the Education Vote; but there might be others which might be taken, such as those for the Diplomatic Service, for Grants in Aid to certain Colonies, and for Pauper Lunatics in Scotland.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): If the Government persist in going on with the Science and Art Department Vote, I shall be obliged to support the Motion for reporting Progress, because it will be in the recollection of the Government that the discussion on the Vote itself in the last Session was taken, I think, about 3 o'clock in the morning, and there was no opportunity given for its discussion by hon. Members interested. I am very deeply interested, and certain other hon. Members I know are also interested, in the question of science schools, and the whole of the questions referred to in this Vote. No opportunity of discussing these questions has been given for a year, and no opportunity is afforded to us now, or is likely to be afforded to us, to bring on a Resolution on the matter. It is a matter of deep importance and interest to many hon. Members; and if the attempt to take the Vote now be persevered in, I shall be obliged to support the Motion for reporting Progress.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will not enter into a contest with hon. Gentlemen opposite on repeated Motions for reporting Progress, because it would only involve delay and we should not do any good. But let us get forward with some Business at all events. In acceding to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) that the Constabulary Vote should not be taken to-night, I followed precedent in endeavouring, as far as I could, to meet the views of hon. Gentlemen when a question of considerable importance was coming under discussion. I would desire to meet the convenience of the House as far as possible; but the House must be aware that there is very little time for discussing these questions. There should be ample opportunity for the discussion of Votes in Committee of Supply; but circumstances compel us to get on now with as proper and reasonable a despatch as possible. I must remark that no general discussion can be taken on Education to-night on the Vote for Science and Art—it must be confined to the particular

Mr. Parnell

item. If the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) will be so good as to withdraw his Motion, I think that by the general consent of the House we may take the unopposed Votes, such as have been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt).

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I share very much in the feeling that must be entertained by the majority of the Committee that it is time to go to bed, and that must also be the view of Members of the Administration, seeing that they have a proposal among their New Rules that we should never sit after half-past 12. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury now complains that there is very little time left for the discussion of these Votes. That may be very true; but even he will not say that it is our fault. We are not responsible for these Estimates not being put down before to-night. Had they been set down earlier we should have made by this time considerable progress. And now I would appeal to the practical common sense of the Government, and to our experience of past years. The right hon. Gentleman says there are certain Votes that are practically unopposed, and that will take but a few minutes to pass. Well, if that is so, then they will occupy but a few minutes on another day. I appeal to the past experience of the Government; this kind of thing has happened before, and with this invariable result—that a very great deal more time has been consumed in fighting over whether we should or should not adjourn than has eventually been found necessary to pass the Votes in question. Under these circumstances, I hope that, as a practical man, the right hon. Gentleman will allow us now to report Progress.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) that there really are most important Votes remaining on the Paper. The Government have made miraculous progress; they have obtained 12 Votes, a most unusual number. I have often known a Government thankful at having passed one Vote in a night. There is one Vote remaining that will not give rise to discussion, or, at least, I do not know if Scotch Members may have something to say about Scotch Lunatics; but, so far

as I know, it is the only Vote not likely to be contested or discussed. I really think the Government might be satisfied. As to time, there is until the end of March to dispose of the few Votes that are left.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I venture to corroborate what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) as to the unfairness to Members not now present of taking Votes at this hour that stand in order after the Police Vote. It was only this evening that application was made to me by an hon. Member, who knew I had experience in such matters, to express an opinion as to how many Votes would be taken, and whether any Business was likely to be taken after half-past 12. I expressed an opinion that we were not likely to get beyond the Police Vote to-night. I may also say that, having listened to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, when asking the Committee to agree to the Bankruptcy Vote, such Vote then passed without further discussion. I must, however, say his language was very ambiguous as compared with what he afterwards said. He said, or implied, that he would throw no obstacle in the way of reporting Progress; but no sooner did he get that Vote passed than he desired to proceed with other Votes.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry that my words should be considered ambiguous, and I must say now in reply to hon. Members that it is the duty of the Government to take a Division against the Motion for reporting Progress, by way of making a protest against what, in my humble opinion, is a waste of the time of the House, when time is most valuable, and cannot well be spared. I am perfectly prepared to postpone any Votes against which any objection can be urged; but there are Votes against which practically there can be no reasonable objection, and, having in view the limited time at our disposal, we ought to make progress with these Votes. If the Motion is persisted in, we must take a Division against it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): The observations just made call for a word of notice. I do not think there has really been any time of the Committee wasted, or if there has been time wasted to-night, it has rather been

by Members on that side than on this side of the House. I have been in Committee, Mr. Courtney, the whole of the evening, and have not intervened in the proceedings. If the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) had been here continuously, he would have seen that discussion has proceeded as much from that side as from this. One explanation of the time occupied is the want of harmony in the statements of right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury Bench. I sincerely hope that, at any rate, this evening's proceedings will not be quoted in the future by the right hon. Gentleman as a deliberate attempt to delay Business.

MR. COX (Clare, E.): In the view of the Government, as shown by their new Rule, Business should cease at half-past 12. It is now past 1; but it is a good opportunity for the Government to give us an idea of how the New Rule would work when in future—

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I rise to Order, Mr. Courtney, and ask you whether the hon. Gentleman is in Order in proceeding to discuss Rules which are the subject of a Motion before the House?

THE CHAIRMAN called on the hon. Member for East Clare to proceed.

MR. COX: I had no intention of discussing the New Rules at all. I was only making allusion to them as an illustration of what might come to pass. It is a question how we shall like the Rules, and we might as well commence an experiment to see how they will affect us.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Before this Division is taken, I desire to say, with every respect to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith), that his language was ambiguous; because I certainly understood him to say to the Committee that if he were allowed to get the Bankruptcy Vote it opened the prospect at which, I am sure we all rejoiced, of our going home. That Vote being allowed to pass without Division, in consequence of that statement of the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot but feel that the Committee has been, as I certainly feel I have been, trapped into a concession, into compliance with the wishes of the right hon. Gentleman, on his request, conveyed in ambiguous language, that this Vote should be allowed to pass. It was allowed to pass, and now

we are called on to proceed with the discussion of other Votes which we consider of a contentious character. I protest against this method of conducting Business, and hope in the future it will not be adopted. I feel it my duty to say, before this Division is taken, that I believe the right hon. Gentleman's language has been ambiguous, or studiously deceptive.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not entitled to make use of such an expression.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: The word I intended to use, Sir, was unwittingly; but if either word is too strong, I have no desire to adhere to it. At the same time, I certainly do say that the language was unwittingly deceptive. We, at all events, were misled into acquiescing in the passing of the Vote, when the discussion was not threshed out; and, at all events, we should have taken a Division upon the Motion for a reduction of the Vote. Under all these circumstances, I do think that the right hon. Gentleman, taking into account the language he used, and the hope he held out that we should be allowed to go home to bed, would do well not to persist in his intention to take a Division now.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) has made a statement that I am rather surprised did not attract the cognizance of the Chair. In my opinion, it was an incentive to Obstruction, or a suggestion to make use of it. "We will now proceed," said the right hon. Gentleman, "to take a Division as a protest," meaning, thereby, that he would use the Forms of the House against us, and that then he would concede the point. He will waste 15 minutes of the time of the Committee under the mere show of making a protest. That is not, in my opinion, language calculated to conduce to the effective conduct of Business. We know it is the ambition of the right hon. Gentleman to be considered the Gladstone of the Tory Party; but it is unfortunate that on this, the first occasion on which Committee is set down, he inveigles us, he induces us, by his suggestion to pass a Vote, and then talks about taking a Division as a protest—*[Interruption.]*

MR. COX: I rise to Order. Is it in Order for hon. Members below the Bar to make demonstrations?

MR. T. M. HEALY: I have no objection to hon. Gentlemen below the Bar giving evidence that they have been at the bar. What I was about to say was, that the right hon. Gentleman, in the first meeting of Committee of Supply, has used an expression and taken a course that will not conduce to the easy management of affairs. It might have been expected that on this, the first occasion, the first night of Supply, he would be very careful to avoid friction; but he has led us to withdraw our opposition to a Vote, and now he is intending, as a protest merely, for factious purposes, to take a Division, and he thinks it reasonable that we should occupy 15 minutes in trotting round the House.

MR. BIGGAR: I should like to raise my protest against the charge the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) has levelled against us, of wasting the time of the House. I should like to know who has been wasting time for the last half-hour? It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman himself has done so wilfully and indefensibly, for the purpose of getting up an outcry in the Tory newspapers charging Irish Members with Obstruction.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 93; Noes 212; Majority 119.—(Div. List, No. 31.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I very much dislike always the practice of passing over one Vote to take another beyond it on the Paper. I think the principle of adhering to the order of the Votes as they are set down is much to be preferred. I would now make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) not to press on with Business now, but allow us to separate. I must say—though I am far from charging him with deceiving the Committee—there seems to have been great misunderstanding as to the words he used. I, with many others near me, gathered that he intended, if we passed the last Vote, to report Progress, and it is unfortunate that we should have this wrangle afterwards in connection with what he said. Without charging him with any breach of faith, his words have caused grave misunderstanding. I now beg to move, Mr. Courtney, that you do leave the Chair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Dillwyn.*)

MR. W. H. SMITH: Of course it is impossible to assent to that Motion, but I have no wish to prolong discussion on a question of words, or even of facts. I would, however, again draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that we have very little time left to complete our financial work in for the year. I invite the consideration of the Committee to the remaining Votes, and they will be passed, I hope, with all reasonable speed. I will no longer resist the Motion to report Progress, if the present Motion is withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon *Wednesday*.

HYDE PARK CORNER (NEW STREETS)

BILL.—[BILL 135.]

(*Mr. David Plunket, Mr. Jackson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): In asking that this Bill be now read a second time, I need detain the House but a few minutes. It is a very short Bill, and its object is to relieve the taxpayers of the country of the expense of maintaining the new roads at Hyde Park Corner made a few years ago when improvements were undertaken there. That expense is £1,500 or £1,600 a-year, and it has hitherto been paid by Votes of the House; but if this Bill passes, the expense will in future fall upon the local rates—that is to say, as to one moiety, on the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square, and, as to the other moiety, on the Metropolitan Board of Works. This Bill, or one similar to it, has been some years before the House, and has met with one misfortune after another. Last year the Bill passed a second reading in this House, and was referred to a Hybrid Committee, and, after being fully considered, passed through all its stages here. Unfortunately, it was not successful in "another place;" but I hope this year the Bill may have the same good fortune in this House, and meet with a better fate in "another place." The

reasons for the Bill are briefly set forth in the Preamble, which recites that the new streets at Hyde Park Corner, formerly part of the Green Park, and, therefore, included in the parish of St. Martin, now practically form part of the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square. While everybody agrees that the maintenance of the streets ought not to fall on the taxpayers of the country, the parishes have not been able to agree amongst themselves as to the proportions of expense should be divided, and so we ask Parliament to pass this Bill. If the House should see fit to read the Bill a second time on the present occasion, I shall at once move that it be referred to a Hybrid Committee, where the details may be discussed. At the same time, if I may venture to make an appeal to those interested, I would say that as the Bill was fully considered before a similar Committee in the last Parliament I hope opposition will not be raised again, and that no great expense will be incurred.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. David Plunket.*)

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I hardly agree with the right hon. Gentleman with reference to the probability of what may happen this year. I am afraid that, unless the present Government make a decided stand, the fate of the Bill will be the same as in the preceding year. It is perfectly true that all parties are agreed that the cost of the roads should not be thrown upon the Imperial funds; but, unfortunately, all the Metropolitan parties—the Board of Works, St. George's and St. Martin's—act on the principle that so long as they get the money voted by Parliament, so long will they allow it to be done. I should like the House to understand that we are paying £1,500 a-year for the repair of one of the handsomest streets in one of the wealthiest quarters of London. I can tell the House what the position of the late Government was in this matter. We would not ask Parliament to vote another shilling for the roads, and if the parishes would not agree—they could agree in half-an-hour—the roads should go unrepaired so far as the Government are concerned. I am sorry the Bill is again to be sent upstairs to a Committee.

Mr. Plunket

There is no necessity for such a Committee at all; it was settled last Session, though, unfortunately, in "another place" the arrangement was upset. I would take the Bill through Committee of the House, and send it up to "another place" before the Estimates come on. Whatever may be the fate of the Bill, I hope the Government will not ask Parliament to vote another shilling for these roads.

MR. PLUNKET: Perhaps I may be allowed to say that I would willingly adopt the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman opposite; but I have been advised by the authorities on such matters that, from its character, it is necessary to refer the Bill to a Hybrid Committee.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. David Plunket.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Should there not be Notice given of this?

MR. SPEAKER: It is not necessary to give Notice.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill, presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. David Plunket.*)

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE BILL.

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Secretary Balfour
The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General
for Scotland.*)

[BILL 131.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I happen to notice that this Bill, though down for Second Reading, has not yet been printed. The subject of Criminal Procedure is one that is interesting to us, and I shall find it necessary to oppose the Motion for Second Reading, unless we hear from the Treasury Bench

that it is the intention to print and circulate the Bill within the next few days.

MR. SPEAKER: It is now proposed to postpone the Order to March 14.

Second Reading *deferred till Monday 14th March.*

COUNTY COURTS (EXPENSES) BILL.
(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Attorney General, Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

[BILL 177.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): This Bill is a very simple one, and its title explains it. The salaries have varied from time to time, according as the payments exceeded or were less than £6,000. The Bill makes no alteration in principle; it merely gives the Treasury power to fix the salaries from time to time, and, in fact, reduces to order that which was very irregular.

Bill read a second time, and *committed for Monday 14th March.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE
(IRELAND) BILL.

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 1.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Notices of opposition to this Bill standing in the names of several hon. Members have been withdrawn; and I, therefore, conclude that there will be no opposition to the formal Motion that you, Sir, do now leave the Chair. It is not intended to take the Bill through Committee to-night, and I will name a day for it, when Questions and Amendments having reference to the subject-matter of the Bill can be raised.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.*)

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): On a point of Order, Sir. Was it not a ruling of your Predecessor in the Chair that, under the circumstances, a Bill could not be read a second time—could not, in fact, be proceeded with?

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know to what the hon. Member refers.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: To the Notices of opposition on the Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: But there are no Notices of opposition on the Paper.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) I am really surprised that the right hon. Baronet should have received a false impression from the disappearance of Motions that stood in the names of several hon. Members. So far as the Bill proposes to fuse the Divisions of the Irish Law Courts into one there is no objection whatever. But, while making that fusion, the Bill proposes to allow existing Judges to remain, and to create an extra Judge. Now, for the last few months the Court of Common Pleas has consisted of only one Judge, the other being engaged in trying criminal cases in Green Street. For the entire sitting, which terminated on Saturday, Common Pleas was worked by one Judge, and no difficulty was experienced; so that it is clear we can work the Division with one Judge. Now it is proposed to fuse this Division into the Queen's Bench, and to appoint another Judge—that is to say, you will have four Judges where three would be ample. A more corrupt and palpable job was never attempted to be perpetrated. The real method for carrying out the purpose would be to fuse the three Divisions; in that we all agree; but do not fill up existing vacancies, and provide for the extinction of future Judgeships. To appoint the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland as a Judge is one of the grossest jobs ever perpetrated. We do not want him in Ireland. I do not say we want him here; but here, at any rate, he is, to some extent, earning the large salary he gets. But when you have two Judges in Queen's Bench and two in Common Pleas, to go and appoint the Attorney General—that is to say, to make the total number seven—is a good example of the state to which English government in Ireland is reduced. What interest have English Members in continuing this corruption in Ireland? What interest can Members of the Bar who represent English constituencies have in keeping up this system of Bar bribery that exists in Ireland? Why should they assist in the job by which the Irish Attorney General gets £3,500 a-year for political services very badly done? This Bill might be attributed to a desire on the part of the right hon.

Baronet to get rid of his Attorney General. Is he sick of him? He cannot be more sick of him than we are; but, whether he be or not, to appoint him an additional Judge of Common Pleas is a huge job. There is not work for the existing Judges in Ireland, and why, then, appoint another? Unless we get a guarantee that this is to be a fusion Bill merely, we shall fight it to the death. The Queen's Bench got on for a considerable period without a fourth Judge at all. You appointed a fourth in 1883, under Lord Spencer, needlessly, and for the purpose of giving promotion to a distinguished official in this House, now Mr. Justice Johnson, and now you are going to continue that system of jobbery, because your Attorney General has expressed an unfortunate opinion on the Plan of Campaign, and you wish to shunt him. Have English Members of the Legal Profession any idea of the work to be done by the Judges in Ireland? How many writs are issued, how many causes moved, how many motions, as compared with the work in the English Courts, and then say why you want another Judge? How many actions at *Nisi Prius* are there, how many motions on appeal, as compared with England? This is simply a system of spoon feeding; it is corrupting members of the Bar by bribing them to fight for Her Majesty's Government for a brief period, that they may afterwards be translated into a higher position. I am not surprised at the appointment of the Attorney General, for we have vivid memories of the appointment of Judge Ormesby, a most inefficient Judge, as he was previously a most incompetent Law Officer. He has now retired, and what I may say is in the air—a mere historical reference. He was admittedly an incompetent man, and I challenge the Chief Secretary to deny it; and he was got rid of by being pitchforked into a Judgeship. Ormesby never held a brief in his life, or a suit more than the one a counsel gets from a friendly solicitor when he is called. For reasons no one but the right hon. Baronet could fully understand it was necessary to get rid of Ormesby, and he was got rid of, as now he is trying to get rid of the Member for Trinity College, because he gave an inconvenient opinion that the Plan of Campaign was a matter the Executive could not interfere with. Beyond that there is no reason why the

Government should proceed with the Bill. It is a job—a gross job. Contrast it with the course the Liberal Government pursued. You transported Sir Robert Hamilton to Van Diemen's Land—["Question!"] I will show the pertinency of this presently, though to move the adjournment of the debate would be more germane to the circumstances. Sir Robert Hamilton was sent to Van Diemen's Land, because he had incurred the hatred of members of the Bar in his endeavour to prevent jobbery and injustice. He set his face against it; he reduced legal fees; and he was transported to Van Diemen's Land. Sir Robert Hamilton drew a Bill for fusing the three Divisions into one, and he proposed to cut down the number of Judges. True it is, the blocks have been taken off the present Bill; but that is not a sign that we want the Bill to pass in its present form. We want to fuse the two Divisions, but we do not want to appoint an extra Judge. Take the power to fuse the two Divisions; but keep your Attorney General earning his ample salary by doing indifferent work in the House. We think also that some guarantee should be given that if these Divisions are fused, the Chief Justice of Common Pleas should have a seat in the Court of Appeal. But the Bill leaves the question of the Court of Appeal absolutely untouched—leaves it weakened by the loss of one Judge. It is a Court of very good repute; we have no fault to find with any of its decisions; and then you take power to destroy the Court of Exchequer. This is the honest Court in Ireland. Every attorney who desires to get law issues a writ for the Exchequer, for there you have Judges who give the law absolutely, even though you have the Queen against you. This is the Court the late Prime Minister, in his Home Rule Bill, intended should be the means of dealing with certain questions in relation to the scheme. You propose to destroy the Court of Exchequer, practically the only honest Court that exists; a Court all the Judges of which are trusted, so far as the popular Party are concerned, in the belief that they will administer the law impartially to Crown or subject. And you leave the Court of Appeal untouched, with the Lord Chancellor always a partizan—I use the word not in an offensive, but in a Party sense.

How desirable it is that you should strengthen the Court of Appeal. The Chairman of Committees—I hope I am committing no breach of confidence—advised us that our Amendments were not strictly germane to the Committee stage, and that they should take the form of Instructions to the Committee, though I am at a loss to know why. We should have no objection to your leaving the Chair, if the Chief Secretary would accept the Instructions; or we could move them as Amendments in Committee. The present Attorney General for England, two years ago, promised to consider whether the Petty Sessions Act—granting appeals from magisterial decisions—should be extended to Ireland; and the present Under Secretary of State for the Home Department gave us something less than a positive pledge in the same direction. But we have still only the means of appealing by means of *certiorari*, and there is no appeal from the Queen's Bench in matters affecting the Crown side. The Queen's Bench is the Government Court, the Government taking care to appoint no Judges there but "true blues." For instance, when Lord Fitzgerald went to the House of Lords, Justice Lawson was appointed to the Queen's Bench; and, in the same way, Judge O'Brien was taken from the Common Pleas to the Queen's Bench. Each Government takes care that the Judges of this Court shall consist of "Stalwarts," and they make it a rule to refuse all Motions for *certiorari*, so we have no appeal from the Queen's Bench, nor have we, as you have in England, appeals from the Magistrates. Why is it out of the purview of this Bill to move the Amendments we proposed in Committee? I should be glad if the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Courtney) would take part in the debate and inform us—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and learned Member will see that that is in the nature of an appeal to the Chair from the Chairman of Ways and Means, and is quite out of Order.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I recognize the force of your objection, Sir, and will not continue the appeal, except to say that perhaps, as a skilled master of the Act, the right hon. Gentleman will at some future time, in the course of the debate, favour us with his views as to the sub-

ject generally. At this hour of the night I think the right hon. Baronet will recognize that it is not advisable to proceed with such an important measure, and that it contains much for careful digestion. Why, we are now seeking to ease the English taxpayer. I see English Members connected with the Bar, and I ask them why will they, because the Government ask them, throw away £3,500 a-year? We will give it you from our bounty, and I guarantee that no Irish interest shall suffer thereby. We offer you this sum in the fulness of our hearts. But the Government will recognize that a matter of this extreme importance cannot be debated at this hour of the night. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) has an important Amendment on the subject. Under all these circumstances, I think the Chief Secretary will not deem it unreasonable to adjourn this debate. We do not desire to block the Bill; we wish to have it discussed, and have given an earnest of our wish in withdrawing our blocks; we are moving with a view to cut down expenditure. I beg, Sir, to move an adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."
—(Mr. T. M. Healy.)

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I have to say to the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down that the course he is most anxious to pursue in the matter—that is, economy in the judicial power in Ireland—will be best secured by following the course suggested by the right hon. Baronet the Chief Secretary. What we have to deal with now is not what is desirable, but what is practicable. Hon. Members below the Gangway will see it is not practicable for the right hon. Gentleman to go into the whole discussion of the administration of the law in Ireland on a Bill of this description. The hon. and learned Member wants to effect a reduction of the judicial staff in Ireland, and the Bill affords a fair opportunity. The proposition of the Government is to abolish the office of Chief Justice of Common Pleas and Chief Baron of Exchequer; and my Amendment is that no Judges be appointed in their place, a saving of £7,000 a-year. The only way, having due regard to business to secure

a debate, is now to agree to the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, asking the right hon. Gentleman to fix such a time for the next stage as will insure a full discussion. I am sure a great number of English Members sympathize very strongly in my view, and I am sanguine that if we make out a good case the Government will have to accept it. I would suggest that we now accept the Motion of the Chief Secretary and allow the Speaker to leave the Chair. Let us endeavour, on the lines of this Bill, to effect a real and genuine Irish reform. If we attempt something beyond the scope and purview of this Bill, I am afraid that we may, in grasping at the shadow, lose the substance.

MR. T. M. HEALY: If the right hon. Baronet will give us his view or consent to the proposal for cutting down the number of Judges I will withdraw my Motion.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: That I cannot do. What I would undertake to do is, to afford a fair opportunity for discussion, when I will express the views of the Government. I cannot undertake to accept proposals that may be made.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman state the Government views on the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: No, Sir.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I do not gather from the Chief Secretary whether he has definitely made up his mind to reject Amendments. I think it might be reasonable for him to say so.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I am sorry if I did not convey my meaning clearly. I introduced the Bill without the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), and do not believe it would be right to insert it. When he comes to make his proposals I will meet them.

MR. PARNELL: Under the circumstances, and as this is the first time we have had the right hon. Gentleman's views on this important matter, the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, it would be right to agree to an adjournment until to-morrow, in order that we may consider whether we ought to sacrifice the Bill, or accept it and obtain

the limited gain it undoubtedly gives us.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do not wish to prolong this discussion at this hour. I agree to the adjournment.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

—o—

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) COMMISSION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) rose to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme for the management of the Mackintosh Farr Fund."

MR. H. F. H. ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.): I rise to a point of Order. The scheme was only laid on the Table to-night, and has not yet been printed and circulated. I wish to ask, under the circumstances, if the House can proceed with the consideration of this scheme?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (MR. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): On the point of Order, Sir, I may remind you that the scheme was laid on the Table last Session and is re-laid to-night, and that it has, therefore, been printed and circulated.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): Having the scheme hung up in this way is detrimental to educational interests. If it be possible, I hope it may be dealt with to-night. The scheme was in the hands of Members last Session, and I do not think there would be any inconvenience in proceeding with the Motion to-night.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): This scheme, Sir, was laid on the Table of the House on August 30 last year. Now, is the period for which it is to lie on the Table to count from that date? If so, this will be the 59th night of Parliament. Should the scheme date back from August 30, or should this be the first of 60 days?

MR. SPEAKER: I understand it was laid on the Table to-night, and must, therefore, so far as the cognizance of the House is concerned, be regarded as a new scheme, and date from to-day.

Mr. Henry H. Fowler

DR. CLARK : A measure exactly similar was discussed here a short time since—I mean the scheme for the parish of Dollar. Would the Rule equally apply there? The scheme was never laid on the Table at all this Session.

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot give a ruling on a case unless I have all the circumstances before me. My ruling applies to the scheme laid on the Table to-night.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH : The Motion I intended to bring on, Mr. Speaker, was in regard to the scheme laid on the Table last year; and as it has fallen, by the introduction of the new scheme, I do not proceed at present.

OWNERS OF DOGS' LIABILITY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Addison, Bill to render the Owners of Dogs liable for injuries done to any person by such dogs, *ordered to be brought in by Mr. Addison and Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 181.]

VEXATIOUS INDICTMENTS (AMENDMENT)

BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Addison, Bill to compel a Prosecutor to find security for costs in cases arising under section two of the thirtieth and thirty-first years of Victoria, chapter thirty-five, *ordered to be brought in by Mr. Addison, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and Mr. Fulton.*

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 182.]

LICENCES (BELFAST) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Sexton, Bill to amend the Law relating to the granting and transfer of Licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors within the borough of Belfast, *ordered to be brought in by Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Peter M'Donald, and Mr. Reynolds.*

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 183.]

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT (1854) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. King, Bill to amend "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854," sections three hundred and forty, three hundred and forty-two, and three hundred and fifty-five, *ordered to be brought in by Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, and Mr. Bond.*

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 184.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 1st March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—*Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment* * (33).

Second Reading—*Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment* (10).

Second Reading—*Referred to Select Committee*—*Coppyhold Enfranchisement* (13).

Committee—*Lunacy Acts Amendment (7-34).*

Report—*Solicitors (Ireland)* (31).

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882)

AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 10.)

(The Lord Thurlow.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD THURLOW said, that in asking their Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill he desired to say that its subject was not new to him, as he had for the last five years been practically and commercially connected with the industry, and had for four years been one of the few Members of their Lordships' House who had had electric light in his own house, and thus had daily opportunity of studying it, and of appreciating its comfort and convenience. It would be interesting to know how many of their Lordships actually had introduced electric lighting into their houses. He should think a dozen or a score would be the outside. Among them, however, there was, he was glad to say, the Leader of the House, the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, who had the honour of having been one of the earliest and most successful pioneers of electricity, not only in connection with lighting, but with the transmission of power. He could not help thinking that the experience of the noble Marquess would make him concur with him in thinking that the moment had now come to amend the Act of 1882, under which, as it stood, central lighting stations and house-to-house lighting were a commercial impossibility. Their Lordships must remember the circumstances under which that Act was passed. The science was then in its infancy. Not long before Lane-Fox and Edison had made discoveries in filaments and attachments that had for the first time made

incandescent lighting practically possible. Electric lighting then rapidly became a medium for the heaviest gambling in shares known since the South Sea Bubble. So great was the notoriety of this gambling that the Government of the day felt bound to step in to prescribe rules for regulating and arresting the flow of capital into all kinds of hasty and ill-considered schemes. All this had now completely changed. The gambling spirit that raised £5 shares to £60 had passed away and been buried in the ruins of many of the Companies which were then promoted. Out of the 36 Companies which, previous to the Act of 1882, were in existence, only seven of any consequence survived. The stage of leisurely repentance had been reached. Meanwhile, immense progress had been made in every branch of electric lighting. One branch of the subject, almost unknown in 1882, and now justly considered as a necessary element in successful incandescent electric lighting—namely, cells or accumulators for storing electricity—had now been practically perfected. Without storage batteries engines and dynamos must be kept constantly working, and the light, which flickered always more or less with the pulsations of the engine, was injurious to the eyesight and unsatisfactory. Of course, much work remained to be done. Reliable and simple meters were still required, but the position had quite changed. Electric lighting was no longer a dream of the future but a reality, and commercially possible but for the Act of 1882. For example, ship lighting, subjected to no trammels, was now being universally adopted by all the great Companies, the Cunard, the P. and O., the German Lloyd, and by the Navies of the world. Even great buildings large enough to make them independent of central lighting stations and able to generate electricity for themselves had adopted it, such as Buckingham Palace, the Grand Hotel, the Métropole and First Avenue Hotels, several theatres, the Athenæum Club, the Junior United Service Club, the Junior Carlton, South Kensington Museum, the British Museum, the Grosvenor Gallery, and many more; but house-to-house lighting remained an utter impossibility, as capital could not be raised under the onerous provisions of the Act of 1882 for central lighting stations. Let their Lordships

compare with this state of things the position of the science abroad and in America, where it was estimated that upwards of £32,000,000, of which £21,000,000 were in arc and £11,000,000 in incandescent, had been invested in electric lighting. To come, however, to the Bill before the House, their Lordships would remember what passed on the subject last year, when three Bills were introduced. For Bill No. 1 he was himself to a large extent responsible, as it was the Bill of a Committee of experts and scientific men who had considered the matter for two years and over which he had the honour to preside. That Bill aimed, no doubt, at too much. Its object was to put electricity on the same footing as gas. This was considered as a desire to set up a second monopoly, while the real object was only to enable it to compete successfully against an existing monopoly. Bill No. 2 was brought in by a noble Viscount not now in his place (Viscount Bury), whose knowledge of the subject was accurate and extensive; and Bill No. 3 was the Government Bill. Those three Bills went to a Select Committee, and important evidence was heard, among others that of Sir Frederick Bramwell, Mr. Preece, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Hucks Gibbs, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Crompton. The result was the amendment of the Government measure, Bill No. 3, and in that amended shape it would have passed into law had it not been for the change of Government and death of the Parliament. The present Bill was founded on that Bill with only one addition. It was last year's Bill No. 3, as amended in Committee with "goodwill" added. It only amended the Act of 1882 as regarded Clause 27, which dealt with the compulsory purchase of an undertaking by a Local Authority. The clause as it stood had been irreverently called the "Old Iron Clause," because under it property was to be compulsorily bought at its break-up value irrespective of its value as a going concern, after only 21 years. The effect of that was to compel undertakers to charge such a rate for electricity as was practically prohibitive and prevented its competition with gas. On this point he must confess to holding strong views, and he could not see why this industry should be treated differently from any other in the event of compulsory purchase by a Local Autho-

rity. Indeed, it had some claims to almost preferential treatment on account of salubrity, cleanliness, and safety. It seemed to be only a question of an alternative—either to allow a fair valuation of goodwill of the business, or to grant the licence for such a prolonged period as would enable undertakers to recoup themselves without charging a prohibitive price. If 50 years were granted this might meet the case; but, on the whole, it seemed wiser to shorten the preferential term, and to provide for competition at its expiry. This was the only question really to be settled. All were agreed on other points, such as the lamps clause, continuous supply, &c. The goodwill question was a thorny one, and admitted of much being said on both sides. His desire was to place it before the House as an open subject for the House in its wisdom to decide. He was willing to accept any reasonable Amendments in Committee if the House would permit the Bill to be read a second time; and he was willing to postpone the Committee stage to any reasonable date to suit the convenience of the Government and to afford time for deliberation. His only desire was that legislation should proceed this Session, and that an industry which only required fair conditions to progress should, in these days of depression and of large armies of unemployed, go on for the good of trade and of mankind at large. His object was to come to the relief of an industry capable of rendering the most important services to civilization. His own belief was that before many years they would find the Board of Trade prescribing electric lighting, on the score of health and safety, in all factories, schools, mines, theatres, churches, and the like; that the Gas Companies in England would follow the example of the Gas Companies on the Continent and in America, convert their plant and become purveyors of electricity; and that finally Registrar Generals of the future would be able to trace to this cause increased immunity from consumption and other kindred diseases which infallibly arose, to a great extent, from vitiation of the atmosphere now breathed. He could only say, in conclusion, that if the Government would undertake to deal with the matter, he would gladly leave it in their hands, and that he was willing to consider all points open to fair con-

sideration in Committee, if their Lordships would accept the view he took of the desirability of speedy legislation, and allow the Bill to be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(*The Lord Thurlow*.)

LORD HOUGHTON said, that no doubt the Bill of the noble Lord was founded on the Government Bill of last year as it emerged from Committee; but there were two particulars in which it differed from that Bill—one of addition and one of omission in regard to the powers of the Local Authorities. The first referred to the veto the Local Authorities might exercise when Companies applied for a Provisional Order. When the Bills of last year were being considered by a Select Committee, the Local Authorities demanded nothing less than an absolute power of veto upon any lighting undertaking in their district. He considered this demand excessive; but he would suggest that when a Local Authority was dissatisfied with, or objected to, an electric lighting scheme, the matter should be referred to the Board of Trade, and if it saw ground for overriding the Local Authority it should make a special Report to Parliament. He hoped that this suggestion would be considered by the promoters of the Bill. On the question of the terms on which an undertaking should be acquired by a Local Authority, he considered the inclusion of the word "goodwill," in the terms of purchase, objectionable, and on this point he would await with interest the expression of the views of the Government. He hoped the Bill would be read a second time.

LORD LINGEN, as a Member of the Select Committee who heard evidence upon this question, said that the Bill raised matters of great and general importance. In his opinion, the interests of a Local Authority entitled it to favourable consideration. The lighting of a town was a strictly local question, and in the case of Dover Harbour their Lordships had just given a second reading to a Bill which proposed to give to a Corporation powers even over a military port. There were two classes of witnesses before the Select Committee, the one composed of engineering, scientific, and financing authorities, and the other of town clerks, who were each

unanimous in advocating and opposing respectively the proposal that Local Bodies should pay for goodwill.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD said, that he thoroughly supported the Second Reading of the Bill, and approved the payment for goodwill if the compulsory purchase of a successful undertaking was insisted upon. No doubt some consideration should be made to Local Authorities for the permission they had granted to Companies to carry out their works; but it should not be more than was just and equitable. With regard to the town clerks alluded to by the last speaker, it was only natural that they should endeavour to serve the interests of their employers by seeking to obtain a ready-made and successful business at a less cost than that they would incur in initiating such a scheme. It was worth consideration whether an arrangement could not be made for the payment of a fair and proper footage-rent by Companies to Local Authorities. If the undertakings of Electric Lighting Companies were to be taken without payment for goodwill, he did not see where appropriation would end. It might be extended to Gas, Water, and Steamship Companies, whose undertakings were all matters of public importance. He believed that in time the electric lighting would so much extend that the machinery would be at a distance from London where land was cheap, and the wires, either overhead or underground, would extend throughout the Metropolis. In that event, he did not see how compulsory purchase without goodwill could be carried out. The attempt to put electric lighting on such a footing ought to be checked at once. The subject of electric lighting was one which he had cherished for a long time, and he believed it was now in a position to stand alone, provided it had a fairer chance than it had when this legislation was introduced. He did not greatly complain of the Act of 1882. He thought that Act had kept back the use of electric lighting, but also had shown that the question must be dealt with on broad and liberal lines.

LORD BRAMWELL said, he was a Member of the Committee which sat on this subject, and one thing was quite certain—that legislation on it was necessary. Electric lighting was now a success which could be relied upon. Whether

it could beat gas was a question; but, as a light, it was a success. At present, however, it could not be supplied to the public on account of the terms as provided by law. As the law now stood the terms were very hard indeed. It was that at some time or other—at the end of 20 years, or 30 or 40 years—however prosperous the concern might be, it was to be bought, not upon the terms paid for a successful concern, which might have been a failure; but it was to be bought according to the value of the plant and property belonging to the undertakers. It had been said that those were fair terms; but capitalists said—“We do not think so; we shall not subscribe on those terms,” and it was in vain to tell them that they ought. The consequence was there was no public electric lighting. He was not going to find fault with the Board of Trade, its changing head or the permanent staff. He thought they ought to do their best for the public; but unfortunately, in this matter, they had imposed such terms that capitalists would not accept them, and so was a stop put to electric lighting. Therefore, he said, some legislation was necessary. The Local Authorities did not undertake the electric lighting themselves; but after a Company had successfully done so, then they wanted to buy the undertaking at par, or less, not seeing that the undertakers were entitled to be paid for the risk they had run of the undertaking being a failure.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, in the absence of his noble Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Lord Stanley of Preston) he did not like to let the subject pass without saying something on behalf of the Government; but after the speech of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) opposite there was really very little to say. He thought the noble and learned Lord had presented the case with absolute fairness; but he wished to clear himself of the charge which the noble Lord on the Front Opposition Bench seemed inclined to level against those who supported the Bill. He had never himself been bold enough to have a single share in any of the Electric Lighting Companies. He looked at the matter virtually as a public question; and he

had no interest in it, and never expected to have, except as a means of promoting a product of public utility. The history of this case was really the history of the action of a Public Department. The Board of Trade was horrified, and intelligibly horrified, at the position in which Parliament found itself in respect to the Water Companies. It was not entirely satisfied with the position in which Parliament found itself with respect to the Gas Companies. He did not say that that feeling had so much plausibility as the other. But the Board seemed to have resolved that it would not allow Parliament, as representing the public, to fall into that difficulty again; and that it would take good care that when electricity came for its authorization to Parliament, terms should be arranged which would place the public in a much better position than they were in with regard to the gas or water companies. But their very natural and praiseworthy feeling was carried to an exaggerated point. Their precautions were excessive. The legislation passed in 1882 had absolutely stifled the enterprise of those who wished to introduce the electric light into this country, and they were now in this position—while in other countries the electric light was used for public purposes, it had not been used in this country, and could not be used, except by those Companies or Institutions or persons who could have the whole machinery for their own use, and produce their electricity entirely for themselves. He could not imagine that Parliament could look on this as a desirable state of things. Why were they not to have the comfort and advantage of this light, which those who were in a position to use it showed an increasing desire every day to have? The only argument which had any plausibility—and it was an argument which appeared to prevail in the minds of many noble Lords—was that they must save the rights of Local Authorities in this matter. He did not dispute that this was a very suitable matter for the Local Authorities to undertake, if they were willing to do so; and he could quite imagine that in 1882 the Board of Trade and the Local Authorities, generally speaking, thought it would be a pity to allow Companies to step into their place. But five years had passed away, and the Local Authorities were not inclined generally

to take this enterprise up. They were really putting the Local Authorities in the position of the dog in the manger; they would not allow the Companies to enter upon an enterprise which they would not undertake themselves. With respect to the noble Lord (Lord Lingen), who had cited the case of Dover Harbour, he would point out that the two instances—that of the electric light and Dover Harbour—were not on all-fours. If the Town Council of Dover had come to their Lordships to claim liberty to fill Dover Harbour up and shut it up until such time as it should be convenient for them to open it themselves, then they would have been in exactly the position of the Local Authorities now, who wished to stifle all electric lighting enterprise until they saw their way to undertake it themselves. He did not think that that was a proposition which Parliament ought to support. He inclined, in spite of the terror of the example of the Gas and Water Companies, to go back to ideas of less restriction and greater freedom in this matter, and to allow enterprise to have its full swing, to remove the obstacles which had hitherto impeded it, and to offer terms, not such as they thought the capitalist ought to accept, but which they found by experience he would accept. So it might be possible, by giving rights which were generous and large, to procure for the public the full advantage of those scientific inventions which other nations had, and which now, by our restrictive policy, we prevented the public from enjoying without doing any good to the Local Authorities which were the subject of so much tender care.

LORD THURLOW said, he would endeavour to amend the Bill in Committee, with the object of meeting the views which had been urged.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly.

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT

BILL.—(No. 13.)

(The Lord Hobhouse.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD HOBHOUSE, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it had been the subject of a great

deal of discussion both in and out of Parliament for several years. It had been before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1884. It was passed in 1885, and came up to their Lordships' House very late in the Session. The Second Reading of it was then refused. In 1886 the Bill again passed the House of Commons, and, although in some details it had been altered, in essentials it was the same Bill as passed by the House of Commons in 1885 and 1886. The Bill contained a vast number of details of a technical character; and the measure was a proper one to lay before a Select Committee. He was, therefore, glad to find that the noble Earl opposite (Earl Stanhope) had put down a Motion that in the event of the Bill being read a second time he would move that it be referred to a Select Committee. The object of the Bill was to accelerate and facilitate the enfranchisements of copyhold. There were two propositions in connection with this subject which he thought should be established—(1) that the extinction of copyholds was a matter of great public interest; and (2) that the extinction would not proceed to any efficient extent unless some pressure of law was put on the parties interested in them. The Real Property Commissioners, in their Third Report of 1882, did not recommend compulsion, but only that some facilities and inducements should be offered. Nothing was done on that Report with regard to copyholds. The matter, however, was specially inquired into by a Committee of the House of Commons which sat in 1838. That Committee was of remarkable strength, including, as it did, the then Attorney General (Lord Campbell), Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and a number of county Gentlemen. They said that—

"The abolition of this tenure would not only be of great public benefit, but should be made, if possible, a national object. They are also of opinion that no plan which merely leaves the option to the parties to enfranchise will meet the exigency of the case, and they are therefore desirous of seeing a plan of enfranchisement introduced which shall have a due regard to the rights as well of the lord as the copyholder, but which shall be eventually compulsory on both."

And they concluded—

"They earnestly desire that measures may be speedily taken to accomplish this object with reference as well to lands of customary as of copyhold tenure. It appears to them that the best mode of effecting it would be by giving

every facility to enfranchisement for a short term of years, and that after that period the enfranchisement should proceed on the compulsory principle."

That Report led to the passing of the Act of 1841, which was the first Copyhold Enfranchisement Act; but the measure applied compulsion in a peculiar way since abandoned, and its machinery was so clumsy that it did not work at all. Only voluntary enfranchisements took place under this Act, and they only reached a yearly average of 42. About 10 years later the matter was again made the subject of inquiry by a Committee of Parliament, who again advised compulsion, and in the result the Act of 1852 was passed. That Act gave, with compulsion, an impetus to enfranchisement, and during the six years of its operation the yearly average was 243. Further compulsion was applied by the Act of 1858; and up to the end of 1883, the latest date to which he could find any tabulated account, there were about 13,000 enfranchisements under it, or an average of 554 yearly. And with all this effect of compulsion there had been no complaint—at least, no audible one—from the parties subject to it. He observed by the tables that of late years there had been a considerable decrease in the number of copyholders enfranchised, and he was told that this was due to the circumstance that the Treasury desired that the office fees should be increased so as to make the parties, in fact, pay the office expenses, and to the rule—a very unjust one as he thought—that the applicant should pay the costs. The present Bill altered the rule about costs, and introduced provisions intended to enable the parties to get what was tantamount to a statutory award for themselves without resorting to the office at all. There were still a great number of copyholds left. In Lancashire, he believed, there were considerable tracts where the whole land was under copyhold, and their Lordships were all familiar with them in different parts of the country; while those who had the greatest experience, and were most conversant with the working of the copyhold system, were most strongly of opinion that it was desirable to give a fresh impulse to their enfranchisement. What, then, was the amount and measure of the compulsion proposed by the Bill? It proposed that on the next ad-

mittance the lord should serve on the tenant who came to be admitted a notice of enfranchisement, and if he omitted to do so he should be subject to certain penalties. With such notice the Bill proposed that the lord should be bound to serve a statement of what he was prepared to take as compensation for enfranchisement. Now, if there was to be any compulsion at all it was impossible to conceive any that would create a less amount of vexation than those provisions. The Bill imposed the very minimum of trouble and expense. The notice is to be given when the lord must be holding a Court for admittance, and has the tenant face to face with him. And the offer is to be made when the lord is demanding his fine, and therefore must have been estimating the improved value of the holding. There were two other clauses which affected compulsion—Clauses 10 and 11—which dealt with sporting rights, and removed them from their present position as manorial incidents which could only be enfranchised by consent, into the category of other incidents, which could be enfranchised in the ordinary way. By Clause 32 the parties were enabled by a memorandum of enfranchisement to obtain that which was equivalent to a statutory award; and there were other clauses connected with it, and drawn with the intention of enabling the parties to dispense with the assistance of the Commissioners, thereby saving time and cost. Clause 44 directed the Commissioners to publish a scale of compensation for the guidance of valuers and parties. It was proposed that compensation should be by way of rent-charge wherever it was of less value than £25—that was to say, whenever it amounted to £1 a-year. That clause had been recommended by the Incorporated Law Society; but he had inserted it rather as affording a basis for discussion in Committee than from any notion that it would be accepted as it stood. It was a subject on which there were great differences of opinion. Other clauses dealt with the payment of rent-charges. Others of considerable importance gave powers to limited owners to give discharges for compensations, to retain small sums, and to charge their payments upon the settled estates. But he would not now go into further detail. He attributed considerable importance to the fact that this measure

had received the approval of the Incorporated Law Society and of the Land Commissioners. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^d."

—(*The Lord Hobhouse*.)

LORD BRAMWELL said that he should not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, because he understood that it was the general desire of their Lordships that it should be read a second time, with the object of its being referred to a Select Committee. He opposed a somewhat similar measure which was brought forward in 1885, on the ground that it proposed to make the enfranchisement of copyholds compulsory, and it was rejected on the Motion for its Second Reading. He fully admitted that the copyhold tenure was a bad one, from which the greatest possible good was not obtainable, and he believed it would be a good thing if, by the wave of a magic wand, the whole of the copyholds could be turned into freeholds. But it should be left to the decision of the landlord and tenant whether that tenure should be converted into freehold.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he was anxious to state at once that, although he did not altogether approve of some of the proposals of the Bill, he did not intend to oppose its Second Reading. He thought that this measure was a great improvement upon the former one. In the present Bill there was, at all events, an effort to preserve the rights of the two parties to the enfranchisement. It was clear that, in the interests of both parties, and in the interests of the public, it was desirable that something should be done to improve the existing law in regard to copyholds. Every lawyer had admitted over and over again that the copyhold tenure was a bad one, and that it had given rise to questions of great difficulty with regard to the minerals lying beneath the land subjected to it. The noble and learned Lord who had last spoken had objected to the enfranchisement of copyhold lands being made compulsory; but it must be remembered that unless some pressure were brought to bear, people would not be induced to move in the matter. He was glad to find that the machinery of this Bill was much more simple and less expensive than that proposed to be established by

the measure of 1885. He hoped that when the Bill came to be examined by a Select Committee, it would be still further improved.

EARL STANHOPE said, that as his noble and learned Friend had accepted his proposal to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, he should support the Second Reading. While admitting that it was desirable to get rid of copyhold tenure, he did not think that there was a great demand for it on the part of the public, seeing that yesterday a Petition had been presented from 269 manors against it. Moreover, the enfranchisement of copyholds was proceeding, if not rapidly, at least satisfactorily—554 enfranchisements a-year—and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had enfranchised 2,500 copyholders. He thought that it was unjust to the landlords, whose interest was remote, to require them to defray the cost of valuation, of fixing the boundaries, and of ascertaining the quantity of minerals beneath the surface out of the almost nominal fines which they received. He would like to see a clause introduced which would guard the rights of the lords of manors to the minerals on the land. There were many complicated clauses and difficulties in the Bill which would require to be carefully dealt with by the Committee. He hoped that power would be given to call for evidence.

LORD HERSHELL said, that this measure was one in which great interest was taken in certain parts of the country, and especially in Lancashire. There was a large tract in Lancashire where the lords' interest was so small as to be of very little value. Those copyholds were considered of much greater value to the stewards, and on enfranchisement the stewards got an amount of compensation far exceeding any which the lords got. A tenure of that description was kept up much more in the interests of the steward than of the lord, and therefore their lordships would not be surprised that the feeling in that part of the country in favour of enfranchisement was very strong. He would ask his noble Friend to consider this question of stewards' compensation. As far as he saw, if the lord was to get anything under £50 the steward was to get £4. He would like to see it provided that when the lord gained only a few shillings the steward should not gain a few

pounds. He thought it would not be impossible to devise a scheme by which a certain number of copyhold tenants might act together so as to reduce the cost. There were many cases in which people would enfranchise if something were to force them, but who would not unless some such compulsion were applied. As to what his noble and learned Friend (Lord Bramwell) had said about the public interest being only the interest of those who possessed the land making such arrangement as they pleased; he thought that if a law of tenure was prejudicial to the public interests the public had a right to provide that it should not exist. He was very much struck by what he had seen when taken professionally to a manor on which certain enfranchisements were to take place. As he went along he observed the most striking contrasts. On some holdings there were new, handsome, and costly buildings, while on others the buildings were squalid and mean; and he was able at once to put his finger upon the holdings which had been enfranchised and upon those where no enfranchisement had taken place. He quite admitted, however, that the Bill ought to be carefully scrutinized in Committee.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he was willing to admit that they ought to simplify the law so as to make registration of title more possible, and, therefore, he would not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. But he must demur to what his noble Friend in charge of the Bill had said as to the burning desire of copyholders to enfranchise land. With regard to what his noble and learned Friend had said about the unimproved condition of the buildings on unfranchised holdings, he would observe that the laws gave the copyholders a perfect means of securing themselves against the slightest loss or inconvenience arising from their desire to improve. All they had to do was to enfranchise the house on its unimproved value and to improve it afterwards. What probably was the case on the holdings of which his noble and learned Friend had spoken was, that where men had capital they enfranchised and put up good buildings, and where they had not the bad buildings remained. He was aware that there were parts of the country, such as Lancashire, where serious inconvenience

did arise under the present state of things. But the returns on the subject were not a sufficient guide as to the number of enfranchisements. It was only the copyholds enfranchised by the Land Commissioners which were given. There were a large number besides which were enfranchised. It was more costly to go to the Land Commissioners than to enfranchise by agreement. It would certainly be a great public advantage if anything could be done to simplify land tenure; but it was not necessary to do anything which would tend by worrying the copyholder to force him into enfranchisement when he did not desire it, and he thought the Bill would have somewhat that effect as it at present stood. If it was thought necessary to compel copyholders to enfranchise, it should be done by a direct Act, with as little expense as possible to the persons interested, and by a law which all classes of persons could clearly understand.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he thought a sense of obligation must be felt by the House and by all those who desired to promote reform of the law, to his noble Friend (Lord Hobhouse) for bringing the subject forward and putting this Bill into the greatly improved form in which it stood. Whether the inconvenience of copyhold tenures was greater or less, all were agreed that it would be a good thing to get rid of them; and this Bill, which would at least accelerate and facilitate their extinction, was therefore a step in the right direction. He hoped that the Bill might emerge from the Select Committee and become law this year.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and referred to a Select Committee.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(The Lord Chancellor.)

(NO. 7.) COMMITTEE.

House again in Committee (according to order).

Clause 3 (Order for reception of private patients, to be made by County Court Judge, Magistrate, or Justice).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), on rising to move the Amendments to Clause 3 which he had undertaken to prepare when the Bill was previously in Committee, said, that he

had endeavoured to meet the views which many of their Lordships opposite expressed when the subject was before under discussion. He believed Amendments such as he proposed were necessary to make the Bill acceptable and to ensure its being passed into law. He would now move the omission of sub-sections 9 and 10.

Moved, To omit sub-sections 9 and 10. —(The Lord Chancellor.)

Motion agreed to.

Moved, To add the following sub-sections:—

“Upon the presentation of the petition the judge, magistrate, or justice, shall consider the evidence of lunacy appearing by the medical certificates, and whether it is necessary for him personally to see and examine the alleged lunatic, and if he is satisfied that an order may properly be made forthwith he may make the same accordingly. The judge, magistrate, or justice, if not satisfied with the evidence of lunacy appearing by the medical certificate may, if he thinks it necessary so to do, visit the alleged lunatic at the place where he may happen to be. When a lunatic has been received in an asylum, hospital, or house, or as a single patient under an order of a judge of County Courts, magistrate, or justice, and has not been already visited by such judge, magistrate, or justice, the lunatic shall have the right either to be visited by or to be taken before a judge, magistrate, or justice, having jurisdiction within the district, unless the medical superintendent of the asylum or hospital, or the medical proprietor or attendant of the house, or the medical attendant of the single patient, shall sign a certificate in writing that such right would be prejudicial to the lunatic, and shall send the certificate to the judge, magistrate, or justice. If such certificate is not signed the superintendent or proprietor of the asylum, hospital, or house, or the person having charge of the lunatic as a single patient shall, within 24 hours after the lunatic's reception, give him notice in writing of such right, and if the lunatic within seven days after his reception desires to exercise such right, the superintendent, or proprietor, or person having charge of the lunatic as a single patient, shall forthwith give notice in writing thereof to the judge, magistrate, or justice, who shall thereupon either visit the lunatic or procure the lunatic to be brought before him by the superintendent, proprietor, or other person. If any superintendent or proprietor of an asylum, hospital, or house, or any person having charge of a single patient omits to give either of the notices mentioned, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanour.”

THE EARL OF SELBORNE suggested some verbal Amendments in the new provisions of the Lord Chancellor.

LORD HALSBURY said he would undertake to consider the Amendments and to make them, if he could, on the Report stage.

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Tuesday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 34.)

TRURO BISHOPRIC AND CHAPTER ACTS

AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Bishopric of Truro Act, 1876, and the Truro Chapter Act, 1878 — Was *presented* by The Lord Bishop of Truro; read 1st. (No. 33.)

House adjourned at Seven o'clock, to
Thursday next, a quarter after
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 1st March, 1887.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — National
Provident Insurance, *nominated*.

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE—HEAD POSTMASTERS.

Mr. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is true that by the present Regulations of the Service all Head Postmasterships in England and Wales with a salary of £120 a-year and upwards, and all in Scotland and Ireland with a salary of £100 a-year and upwards, are filled by the promotion of deserving Post Office officials; whether these Regulations do afford the Department over which he presides frequent opportunities of rewarding meritorious servants, and also secure the efficiency of the Service by the appointment of well qualified persons to fill vacancies; whether the opportunity for advancement afforded by these appointments has created a healthy stimulus amongst, and is greatly valued by, the Post Office servants; whether this system has been in operation for over 25 years and been found to work well; and, whether it is true, as reported in the public Press, that he now proposes to change these Regulations; and, if so, to what extent, in what direction, and with what object will the alteration be made?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I am indebted to the hon. Member for an opportunity of answering in this House Questions respecting which very unwarrantable misrepresentations have recently been current elsewhere. My

answer to the first Question is in the affirmative. The three following Questions relate rather to matters of opinion than to matters of fact. I may, however, perhaps, be permitted to say that, as regards the more important and responsible of these posts, I entirely concur with the views indicated by the hon. Member. As regards the minor appointments, I consider them less as rewards for meritorious service, or a stimulus to greater exertion, than as a means of providing for those officers who, having no ambition to rise to higher and more arduous functions in the Department, are content to drop into humbler posts of comparative independence. I do not deny that the system may have worked satisfactorily upon the whole; though I am disposed to believe that it would have worked better if rather a higher limit of salary had been fixed at which a postmaster is precluded from increasing his income by other occupations. I have made no such proposal as is suggested by the last Question; and I may add that, during my tenure of Office, while I have accepted the transfer of several of these appointments from the Treasury to the Post Office, I have not transferred any from the Post Office to the Treasury.

IRELAND — MR. FRANCIS MORRICE, SECRETARY TO THE GRAND JURY, CO. CLARE—FEES FROM ROAD CONTRACTORS.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether Mr. Francis Morrice, Secretary to the Grand Jury, County Clare, demands the following fees from road contractors prior to and after the execution of contracts—namely, 1s. for each printed tender form, 2s. 6d. by way of fee, and a sum varying from 4s. to 8s. on being paid the amount of their contract; and, whether these charges are legal; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government will take any action to put an end to the practice?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The Government know nothing of this matter. I have stated before that the Secretary of the Grand Jury was entitled to charge a fee for a form of tender. I cannot give any opinion as to whether the charges mentioned are

legal or not; but if they are illegal the persons aggrieved had their legal remedy.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—“BOYCOTTING” MR. ALEXANDER WILSON, OF CASTLEWELLAN, CO. DOWN.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Castlewellan, County Down, having taken a house from which a Nationalist was evicted, has been “boycotted;” whether the priest of the parish has refused to deal with the man who supplied Wilson with milk while he continued to do so; and, whether it is a fact that Wilson cannot go out after dark without risk to his life; and, if so, whether the Government will take steps for his protection?

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked, Whether this was the same Mr. Wilson who was reported in all the Tory papers of the time to have been attacked on the 28th of November near Castlewellan, and whose statement, after careful investigation by the Constabulary, was found to be untrue?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I have not heard anything of the circumstances to which the hon. Member (Mr. M'Cartan) refers. With regard to the Question of my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Waring), I may say that the facts as to the “boycotting” are substantially as stated; but the feeling against him is said to be dying out, and as there is a very mixed population in the district he does not appear to have suffered any serious inconvenience. It is not the case that he is in danger if he goes out after dark.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DYNAMITE OUTRAGE AT RESIDENCE OF MR. T. RICE HENN.

MR. COX (Clare, E.), asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the recent attempted dynamite outrage at the residence of Mr. T. Rice Henn (County Court Judge, Galway), Paradise, Kildysart, was discovered by Sergeant Walsh and a sub-constable who accompanied him; whether Mr. Rice

Henn is under police protection; and, if not, what was the object of the visit of the police to Paradise; whether Mr. Carey, District Inspector Royal Irish Constabulary, was one of the guests at Paradise that night; whether, on some nights previously, Mr. Carey found Sergeant Walsh and his companion in a public house when they should have been on patrol duty; whether, in consequence of this, Sergeant Walsh and this sub-constable were under notice of removal from Ballynacally Police Station when the outrage was discovered; whether a steward in the employment of Mr. Henn was under notice of dismissal at the same time; and, what was the nature of the report of the County Inspector as to the source of the outrage? The hon. Gentleman further asked, Whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been directed to the language of Mr. Justice O'Brien in addressing the County Clare Grand Jury at the Assizes yesterday? When referring to this case he said—

“Whatever may be the true and real complexion of that occurrence, it does not bear out the existence of a motive of an agrarian crime.”

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): My attention has not been directed to the Judge's language, and I cannot say if it has been correctly reported. The statements in the question are partially correct, but they are inaccurate in some important particulars. Mr. Henn was not under police protection. The police were patrolling near his house in the ordinary course of their duty, as they frequently do. The constable who discovered the dynamite was not under notice of removal, as alleged, or in any way connected with the circumstances which led to Sergeant Walsh being in that position. The County Inspector reports that attempts are being made in the district to fasten the guilt of this attempted outrage upon Sergeant Walsh, who has lately, in the discharge of protection duty, become unpopular with some sections of the people. But the County Inspector states that there is no ground for believing this charge, and that he has absolutely accounted for the actions during the evening of Sergeant Walsh, who was also accused. Of course every possible inquiry is still being made.

HEALTH OF THE NAVY, 1885—INSANITARY CONDITION OF WATER TANKS AT MALTA.

Mr. NORTON (Kent, Tunbridge) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If his attention has been called to the following extract from the Statistical Report of the Health of the Navy for the year 1885, lately presented to Parliament:—

“The water supply to the ships at Malta had, in the usual routine, been frequently tested and found to be fairly chemically pure; but, in the light of the investigation now carried out, it was discovered that one of the Naval tanks, that, in fact, from which the water was at the time being taken for the ships, had not been cleaned out, it is stated, for a number of years; and the water, on being examined by the Government analyst, was found to contain a large amount of albuminoid ammonia, and pronounced unfit for drinking” (page 47);

and, who is responsible for this negligence, and what steps have been taken to prevent its recurrence?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk), in reply, said he had looked at the Report referred to by the hon. Gentleman, and considered the matter one of importance, requiring fuller investigation both at Malta and at home.

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—RECENT DISTURBANCES IN TONGA.

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, If he can state the name of the Commissioner appointed by Her Majesty's Government to report upon the recent disturbances in Tonga; whether Mr. Thurston, the existing Deputy Commissioner, will take part in the inquiry; and, what steps in the meantime Her Majesty's Government propose to take for the protection of those natives who have resisted persecution at the hands of Mr. Shirley Baker?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Charles Mitchell, who is an able and judicious officer, has been directed to go to Tonga. Mr. Thurston will not go thither at present, unless Sir Charles Mitchell should be unable to leave Fiji. The High Commissioner, with the assistance of Her Majesty's ship, will, no doubt, take any measures that he may deem necessary for the protection of natives and others, pending the consideration of his Report.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS—BOAT ACCOMMODATION ON PASSENGER SHIPS.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it is the case that, under the present Regulations, a passenger ship of 1,000 tons burthen, carrying 300 passengers, is not compelled to carry so many boats as a cargo ship of 2,000 tons, with a crew of 30; and, whether, in the Regulations as to boat accommodation, there is any reference whatever to the number of passengers carried?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The boats of passenger ships are regulated by the Passengers' Acts of 1855 and 1863, and the boats of cargo ships by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and Acts amending it. In both cases the boats are regulated by the net registered tonnage of the ships carrying them, and not by the number of persons carried in the ships. The boats required by law to be carried by a passenger ship of 1,000 tons register are six, of the total cubic capacity of 2,545 cubic feet, of which 900 cubic feet must be in life-boats. The boats required to be carried by a cargo ship of 2,000 tons register are either six boats of 2,034 cubic feet capacity, of which two must be life-boats of 999.6 cubic feet capacity, or seven boats of 1,892 cubic feet capacity, of which two must be life-boats of 999.6 cubic feet capacity. I would add, however, that the Board of Trade are not in a position to deal with the subject until the Report of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea has been received, after which the subject will be early considered.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—“THE QUEEN *v.* DILLON”—THE JURORS.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has any objection to lay upon the Table of the House a statement of the names, addresses, and occupations of the jurors who were sworn to try Messrs. Dillon, O'Brien, and others on a charge of criminal conspiracy at the late Dublin Commission; a similar statement concerning the jurors directed by the Crown at that trial to stand aside; and a statement of the result of the inquiries, made

at the instance of the Crown Solicitor, into the political, religious, and other antecedents of these jurors?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I cannot undertake to lay any such statement upon the Table.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—“THE QUEEN *v.* DILLON”—THE SHORT-HAND REPORT.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the short-hand report obtained by the Crown of the trial of Messieurs Dillon, O'Brien, and others, at the last Dublin Commission, will be paid for out of public funds; and, whether he has any objection to have such report, or portion thereof, printed and circulated for the information of Members of this House?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): As in former cases of the kind, the reports have been prepared for the use of the Government, and it is not intended to circulate the entire or any portion thereof.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) pointed out that copies of the reports of the case of the “Queen *v.* Parnell” had been circulated. He thought there was one in the Library of the House of Commons, and there was one in the Library of the King's Inns. He wished to know, would the same facilities for publicity be given for the report of the case of the “Queen *v.* Dillon?”

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND said, the same rule would be adopted with regard to this case as was adopted in the case of the “Queen *v.* Parnell.”

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL QUARTER SESSIONS, BALTINGLASS.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the proceedings of the Criminal Quarter Sessions for the Baltinglass Division of the county of Wicklow, before Judge Darley, on the 15th of January last, when Myles Doyle and Michael Nolan were charged with having, on the 11th December 1886, thrown timber upon the railway, near Balting-

lass, with the intent thereby to upset the train, and upon a second count with having thrown timber upon said line endangering the safety of persons travelling thereon; whether the prisoners pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to one month's imprisonment each with hard labour; and whether, in view of the serious character of the offence, he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): It appears, on the face of the Question, that the Judge, in disposing of this case, exercised the discretion with which his office invested him. A Judge is responsible to Parliament alone, and neither the Lord Chancellor nor the Executive has any right to interfere.

SAVINGS BANKS—CARDIFF TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK—TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS—PAYMENTS FROM THE EX-CHEQUER.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the National Debt Commissioners paid interest on the sum of £160,000 standing to the credit of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank up to September 1886; whether the Trustees of that Bank refused to allow any interest to depositors after 20th November 1885, nearly a year previously; and whether the amount so received, as interest on deposits from the National Debt Commissioners, was devoted to partially replacing the deficiency caused by the frauds of the Actuary of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank? The hon. Gentleman also asked, Whether the sum of £3,081 5s. 7d. was paid from the National Exchequer as interest to Trustee Savings Banks over and above the interest accruing on the securities standing to their credit for the year ending 20th November 1885; whether a sum of £6,000, expended in managing the Trustee Savings Banks Accounts in the National Debt Office, was also paid from the funds of that Department; whether he will state the amount paid under the above heads for the year ending 20th November 1886; whether, in view of the absence of control over the application of such funds, eleemosynary grants from the National Exchequer to Trustee Savings Banks should be continued; and

whether the Government will introduce a measure which will so amend the Law as to guarantee to Trustee Savings Banks the interest legitimately accruing from the securities standing to their credit, and no more?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The National Debt Commissioners allowed interest on the sum of £160,000 up to September, 1886, as well as upon moneys remaining in their hands up to January, 1887, the date of the final withdrawal. The Trustees allowed no interest to their depositors after November 20, 1885. The amount of interest received by the Trustees from the National Debt Commissioners between November 20, 1885, and January, 1887, was £4,543, the bulk of which would have been payable to the depositors but for the action taken by the Trustees in stopping interest after November 20, 1885. The amount of interest thus credited to the Trustees was, therefore, applied to the partial reduction of the deficiency caused by the frauds. The National Debt Commissioners were not aware that interest to the depositors had been stopped until January 17, 1887, after the last moneys at interest had been withdrawn. Under the Act of 1880 (43 & 44 *Vict.* c. 36 s. 2) the National Debt Commissioners are obliged to allow interest at the rate of 3 per cent on the money deposited with them by the Savings Bank Trustees. The Commissioners invest this money and any other moneys they may hold, and the rate of interest they earn is sometimes less and sometimes more than 3 per cent. If it is less, as it is at present, they have, nevertheless, to give the Trustees their 3 per cent. and the deficiency falls on the Exchequer. If, on the other hand, it is more, the amount earned in excess of 3 per cent goes into the Exchequer. At present, as I have said, the Commissioners get less than 3 per cent on their investments as a whole, and so they have to pay the Trustees more than the interest earned on their deposits. On the whole, however, the Exchequer has gained rather than lost by the arrangement since 1880, and I see no reason for altering it. In answer to the hon. Member's other Questions, I have to say that the amount paid to the Trustees in excess of the interest earned on their deposits was in

the years ended November 20, 1884, £3,081; 1885, £4,774; and 1886, £4,096 (estimate) respectively, and that the estimated annual cost of the management of the work connected with the Banks is £6,000.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY— COUNTY INSPECTOR BROWNRIGG.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether County Inspector Brownrigg was fined at Youghal Petty Sessions, held on Thursday, the 18th February, for assault; how many previous criminal convictions are recorded against the said peace officer; and, whether such convictions diminish the pension usually accorded well-conducted officers on retirement from the Service; and, if so, to what extent will it affect the said County Inspector?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): For an alleged assault committed in the discharge of his duty Inspector Brownrigg was fined in a nominal sum of a farthing, without costs, and the magistrates said the case should never have been brought into Court. No previous criminal convictions are recorded against him.

DR. TANNER asked if the right hon. Gentleman could say why such a statement was made by the magistrates—that the case should never have been brought into Court—when they were obliged to fine him?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I really do not know. I suppose they found themselves technically obliged to convict him.

SLAVE TRAFFIC—EAST COAST OF AFRICA.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What is the number and description of the cruisers of Her Majesty's Navy exclusively engaged in the suppression of the slave traffic along the East Coast of Africa and on the Red Sea?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): There are one corvette, two sloops, and three gun vessels employed on the East Coast of Africa and in the Red Sea. These ships are there for the general work of the Station, and cannot be described as exclusively engaged in the suppression

of the slave traffic; though they are provided with the necessary warrants to enable them to act whenever occasion requires in the suppression of the Slave Trade. In addition to the above there are three vessels, usually employed in the Persian Gulf and on the Arabian Coast, which assist in the suppression of the Slave Trade?

CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS—OFFICIAL INFORMATION.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is the fact that no official information has been furnished to Parliament on Central Asian affairs during this and the preceding Parliament, nor since May 1885, when Blue Book, "Central Asia" 5, 1885, was issued; and, when further and more recent information will be furnished to Parliament on this subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Blue Book "Central Asia" No. 4, 1885, carries the Correspondence down to the signature of the Protocol of September 10, 1885, for the settlement of the Afghan Frontier from Zulfikar towards the Oxus. Certain points in that frontier are still under discussion; and it would not be desirable to present further Papers until these are arranged.

WATER SUPPLY—(METROPOLIS) CHLSEA WATER COMPANY.

COLONEL DAWNAY (York, N.R., Thirk) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the action of the Chelsea Water Company, who have cut off the water supply from a house in Cadogan Street because it was derived from a pipe through an adjoining house, the tenant of which has not paid his water rate; whether he is aware that the Chelsea Company refuse to renew the water supply without payment of the arrears due by the late tenant of the adjoining house; and, whether he will take steps to prevent householders from being subjected to similar treatment by the London Water Companies in future?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) (who replied): The Board has no information respecting this case prior to notice of

the Question being given yesterday. At present I can only say that I have to-day communicated with the Chelsea Waterworks Company, and I am informed by them that the supplies to Nos. 10 and 12, Cadogan Street, have recently been withdrawn on due notice for non-payment of water rates; that each house had a separate supply from the roadway, which was withdrawn in each case; that the tenant of No. 12, to which the Question refers, has not yet paid the statutory charges to entitle him to have the supply re-instated; and that it is on this account that the supply has not been renewed, and not, as the tenant states, because the arrears due by the late tenant of the joint house, No. 10, have not been paid.

WAR OFFICE—FORTIFICATION OF SINGAPORE—ARMAMENT.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he can state how many guns have been sent out to Singapore for the fortifications planned and approved of in the year 1884, and when the armaments for the defences now in process of erection will be completed; and, whether the Government propose to fortify the northern end of the Island of Singapore, and any part of the adjacent territory of Johore, in order to secure the efficient defence of Singapore as a coaling station?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): A large proportion of the guns required for the defence of Singapore has been sent out. Of the remainder all but two will be despatched during the present year. I am sure that my hon. Friend will see that it is not desirable for me, in the interests of the Public Service, to give details of the work.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFICIENCIES IN NAVAL GUNS AND AMMUNITION.

SIR WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether the Papers and Correspondence embodying the facts relating to alleged deficiencies in naval guns and ammunition, amounting to upwards of £1,250,000, and the delay in the transfer of Votes for Naval Ordnance from the Army to the Navy

Estimates, have been printed; and, if so, can they be seen by Members of this House on application to the War Office; and, if not, can he state the reason?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): With reference to the first part of the Question, I am not aware of the existence of any such correspondence. With regard to the question of transfer to Naval Votes, the Inter-Departmental Correspondence is not yet complete; and, under such circumstances, correspondence is usually regarded as confidential.

VACCINATION.

MR. T. ROBINSON (Gloucester) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether a great number of parents refuse to have their children vaccinated because they believe that vaccination is useless and dangerous; and, whether he proposes to take any steps to put an end to the imposition of cumulative penalties? The hon. Member said he wished to put another Question, which he had not placed on the Paper—namely, whether, having regard to the many persons who had conscientious objections to vaccination, Her Majesty's Government would have the whole matter inquired into, either by a Royal Commission or a Committee of that House?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): In reply to the last Question, I have to say that the Government cannot consent to any such inquiry. To the Question on the Paper my answer is as follows:—There is no doubt that a certain number of persons object to have their children vaccinated. The views of the Local Government Board on the Question of repeated prosecutions are well known. They were set forth in a letter to the Board of Guardians of the Evesham Union, which was presented to Parliament. I cannot hold out any expectations that the Board will propose legislation with the view of preventing the imposition of cumulative penalties.

INDIA—MADRAS ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—EXCLUSION OF EUROPEAN ARTICLES.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Superin-

tendent of Army Clothing, Madras, in inviting tenders for the use of the Army Clothing Department for the official year 1888-9, uses the following words, "Articles of European manufacture are not required;" and, if so, why are goods of Lancashire and Yorkshire manufacture practically excluded from competition, without any reference to quality or price?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): It is a rule of the Indian Service that articles of European manufacture must be purchased through the Stores Department of the India Office, in order that they may be properly inspected in this country before being sent out. A large demand for Army clothing for Madras for 1888-9 is now being dealt with in that Department. Where it is found to be more economical to use an article of local manufacture or indigenous origin the purchase is effected in India. The expression referred to in the Question, which does not seem a very happy one, appears intended to give notice of this limitation of authority to purchase on the part of the Government of Madras. The Secretary of State will call the attention of the Madras Government to the subject.

PUBLIC MEETINGS (IRELAND).

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If local Justices of the Peace in Ireland are to be the sole judges as to the legality of the objects of meetings; and, whether they will be allowed, upon their own interpretation of matters of law and fact, to suppress public meetings indiscriminately?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Local Justices in Ireland are not the sole judges as to the legality of their acts, and ought not to suppress public meetings indiscriminately.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a Proclamation was issued on Saturday evening the 12th February and posted in and about the town of Youghal; whether the Proclamation was signed by Thos. O. Plunkett, S.R.M., and Starkie, R.M., forbidding any public meeting of the

people of Youghal, or of the surrounding district, on Sunday the 13th February; whether it is true that no less than four meetings were held in the locality on the date in question; whether the meeting was proclaimed by the said Resident Magistrates owing to, or in consequence of, informations having been received by them that, were any meeting permitted to be held in the locality, that it might lead to a breach or disturbance of the peace; whether the said informations were given by three men, named W. S. Hunt, Bailey, and Blackeney; and, whether these men are members and paid agents of the Defence Union?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: A notice prohibiting an intended meeting was signed and posted as stated. Informations had been sworn, but not by the persons mentioned in the Question. Captain Plunkett has the full approval of the Government for his action in the matter, which was justified by the circumstances of the district and the matters sworn in the informations. Very exaggerated reports have been published as to other meetings held in the locality on the occasion.

DR. TANNER asked if the right hon. Gentleman could say by whom the informations were sworn?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH said he was not prepared to do so.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Does the right hon. Gentleman make any distinction between Resident Magistrates and ordinary Justices of the Peace; and would it, in his opinion, be in the power of ordinary Justices to proclaim a meeting?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Ordinary Justices of the Peace in Ireland or in England have to act for the preservation of the peace, and are responsible for their actions in that capacity. Any person aggrieved has a right of legal action against them.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask whether the Government will give a guarantee that if an action be brought against Justices of the Peace they will not help the Justices by defraying the expenses of the litigation?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I certainly will reply to no Question of that sort. The Government will deal with any matter as it arises.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES—THE FISHING BOAT "SKYLARK."

SIR SAVILE CROSSLEY (Suffolk, Lowestoft) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the amount of damages to be paid by Her Majesty's Government to the owners of the fishing boat *Skylark*, during the last autumn fishing season in the North Sea, has yet been settled; and, whether the money due to the crew, on account of clothing and other necessities lost, has yet been agreed upon and paid; and, if not, whether he will take steps to have it paid as soon as possible, to enable the men to proceed to sea and earn their living?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): £200, the amount due to the crew of the *Skylark* for the loss of clothing and estimated profits, has been paid. The residue of the claim is in the course of settlement, and is being pushed forward as rapidly as possible.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES CONVENTION—DAMAGES BY BELGIAN OWNERS.

SIR SAVILE CROSSLEY (Suffolk, Lowestoft) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is aware that the numerous actions brought by English fishing-boat owners against Belgian owners, to obtain compensation for wilful damages, have resulted in every case in the infliction of a merely nominal fine; and, in view of the fact that justice cannot be obtained, what steps will be taken by Her Majesty's Government to amend the present North Sea Fisheries Convention?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I am aware that in numerous prosecutions of Belgian fishermen for wilful damage to the property of British fishermen, fines, with alternative imprisonment, of small amount have been inflicted. There is a certain confusion in the terms of the hon. Member's Question, as fine or imprisonment could not be inflicted in actions brought for compensation, nor could the Judge in a criminal proceeding award compensatory damages. As I stated some time ago, the Belgian law gives a certain facility to aggrieved parties in permitting them to bring civil actions for compensation before the same Judge before whom

official prosecutions have been instituted. I am not aware that fair compensation has not been obtained in such cases. Her Majesty's Government have represented the inadequacy of the penalties inflicted for some acts of wilful damage. The Belgian answer is that the amounts are similar to those imposed in French and Dutch Courts in like cases; that the persons convicted are condemned to pay the cost of the proceedings, and are subjected to loss of time and wages, besides having in the background the liability to civil actions. Her Majesty's Government cannot, therefore, admit that justice in these cases cannot be obtained.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POSTAL SERVICE IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether letters from England and Dublin, sent by limited mail to Belfast, are delivered at Newtownards, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, and the other principal towns in North Down and East Down, in time to have replies forwarded by limited mail from Belfast to Dublin on same day; whether a reasonable offer has been already made by the Directors of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company to carry the mails to these districts in time to have replies forwarded by limited mail to Dublin on same day; and, whether the Postmaster General will make provision to have these important districts supplied with such a postal service as will enable the people to have replies to their English letters forwarded on the day of delivery?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Newtownards, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, and the other towns referred to by the hon. Member are not at present able to reply the same day to letters from England and Dublin. The Department has been for some time in negotiation with the Belfast and County Down Railway Company with the view of obtaining an improvement of the service, and the matter is still under consideration. I have also been for some time in communication with my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North Down (Colonel Waring) on the subject.

Sir James Fergusson

BURMAH (UPPER)—THE MILITARY EXPEDITION—ALLEGED CRUELITIES.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to a telegram from its Rangoon Correspondent, published in *The Times* of 28th February, in which it is stated that three Dacoits having been killed in an encounter with armed police, "their heads were cut off and carried to Bassein," and that "the practice of decapitating Shan Dacoits, and carrying their heads about the country, is generally condemned;" whether it is true that the practice exists in the British Police Force in Burmah of decapitating dead enemies and carrying their heads about the country; and, whether he will make inquiry into the specific instance mentioned and order the immediate discontinuance of the practice, and the reprimand of those concerned in it if it is found to exist?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The Secretary of State cannot believe that such a practice as that of decapitating Dacoits and carrying their heads about the country exists in Burmah. He has already telegraphed to India to ask for the facts in the specific case referred to.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE NEW CODE, 1887.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, When the New Code (1887) of Minutes of the Education Department will be distributed among Members?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford), in reply, said, the Code was now in the hands of the printers, and would be published with the least possible delay.

LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES—LEGISLATION.

MR. LEES (Oldham) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he has yet come to any decision as to whether he will advise Her Majesty's Government to introduce legislation this Session to amend the Law relating to Limited Liability Companies?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I can at present only refer the hon. Member to a reply which I recently made to a similar Question, and repeat that the subject is still under consideration. We hope to deal with it, if other Business admits of so doing.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—PURCHASES OF GLEBE LANDS.

MR. REYNOLDS (Tyrone, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he would suggest to the Irish Land Commission the expediency of suspending legal proceedings against the 47 glebe purchasers in arrear, pending the decision to be arrived at by the Government on the question of legislation in relief of that class of tenants?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): This is a matter rather for the Treasury than for me to decide; but I should not think that the suggestion of the hon. Member could be adopted, for the position of the 47 tenants in question is such that I do not see how they could be relieved from it by any legislation in relief of glebe purchasers generally.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — SECRETARY'S OFFICE — PROMOTION.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it has been hitherto a rule that promotion from Second Class (Grade 1) to First Class (Grade 1) Clerkships in the Secretary's Office of the Post Office should be made by selection for merit; whether the fact that such promotions would be made on this principle was announced by the Post Office (through the Civil Service Commissioners) to competitors at all recent open competitions for Grade 1 Clerkships at which clerkships in the Secretary's Office of the Post Office were awarded; whether he has recently refused to promote from Class 2 to Class 1 in the Secretary's Office a clerk who was recommended to him by the Secretary as deserving such promotion; whether he has insisted on promoting in his stead a clerk against whose promotion the responsible heads of the Secretary's Office have unanimously protested, such clerk being eli-

gible neither on the ground of merit nor of seniority; and, whether it is his intention to re-consider his action in the matter?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I believe that the hon. Member has correctly stated the practice as regards promotion in the Postal Service in the first and second Questions which he has placed on the Paper. It is also the fact that I have recently declined to adopt the Secretary's recommendation to promote to the First Class one of the junior officers in the Second Class over the heads of several clerks of much longer standing. The gentleman whom I have promoted was, in my judgment, fully qualified for promotion, and was the senior clerk in the class, with the exception of one officer who, on the Secretary's recommendation, has been passed over on about 16 occasions. I have received no such protest as the hon. Member refers to; and I think he can scarcely be aware how serious a breach of discipline such a protest would constitute. I have no intention of re-considering my decision in this matter.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (IRELAND) —THE "BOX FUND."

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If there was, in connection with the Court of Chancery in Ireland, up to the passing of the Judicature Act, what was known as a "Box Fund," to which the sum of 1s. had to be contributed on the filing of each pleading and affidavit in the Chancery Division; how long the fund was in existence; and, what was the total sum contributed to it, and how was the money applied?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The facts as to the "Box Fund" are substantially as stated in the first part of the Question. The fund has existed from time immemorial. I am unable to give the total sum contributed to it; but in the three years preceding 1875 the receipts averaged £392. They were applied to the payment sometimes of gratuities, but more commonly of small annuities to females in very reduced circumstances, for the most part widows and daughters of solicitors. The fees were collected for the fund by usage only, and when the Judicature Act was

passed the fund was closed by the then Lord Chancellor, and the balance standing to its credit divided among the then existing annuitants.

MR. O'HEA asked if the hon. Gentleman could say who were the persons among whom the money was divided and the amounts paid to them?

MR. JACKSON: Perhaps the hon. Member will give Notice of that Question.

IRISH PRISON SERVICE—THE "INTERN OFFICERS."

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What percentage on present salaries is proposed to be added to the pay in the different grades of all "the intern officers" in the Irish Prisons Service?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The increases are not given in the form of any regular percentage, but the pay of the different grades has been revised according to the conditions of each. The details could not be conveniently given in answer to a Question.

BURIALS—DISTURBANCE AT STRATFORD CEMETERY—WHITECHAPEL.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the circumstances attending the death and funeral on Tuesday, 22nd February, at the Stratford Cemetery, of Simon Tweed, a boot finisher, of Whitechapel; whether it is the fact that Tweed died in hospital owing to the effects of "sweating," or overwork; whether deceased worked 18 hours per day throughout the year at 10s. per week; whether the following description of what occurred at the cemetery is correct:—

"The keeper of the cemetery offered a strong resistance to the entrance of the banner bearers, but supported by their friends, notwithstanding the presence of 100 policemen, these passed through the gates. A circle was then formed around the Tabernacle, and one of the family went inside to see the body. Shortly afterwards the police were called in to eject the mourner, who, it seems, protested against the manner in which the ceremony over the dead was being performed. The police, attacked vigorously by the crowd, barricaded the doors, and batoned the people. Free fighting ensued,

and a number of people were trampled on in the struggle;"

and, whether, if the above report is true, it is his intention to make any inquiry into the conduct of the police on the occasion?

MR. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.) asked, Whether the Home Secretary was aware that the persons on this occasion broke into the ground, ejected the Rabbi, who was about to read the Burial Service, and declined to allow the prayers to be read over the deceased, notwithstanding the wish of the mourners?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I know nothing of the cause of Tweed's death, or the number of hours that he worked. The Chief Commissioner of Police informs me that the newspaper account of this funeral, quoted in the Question, is very much exaggerated. The funeral in the West Ham Jewish Cemetery was attended by a procession of Socialists, with banners; and two of them, who behaved in a disorderly manner while the Burial Service was being read by the Rabbi, had to be removed by the police; but with the exception of this incident there was no disorder. I have also information to the effect that certain persons in the procession declined the assistance of the Rabbi, took the coffin themselves to the grave, and buried it without assistance from him. I have no intention of making any further inquiry into the matter.

HARBOUR ACCOMMODATION COMMITTEE.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of the Government to give any effect to the recommendations of the Harbour Accommodation Committee, especially as to the appointment of a small Royal Commission to complete the work of the Committee, and as to giving increased facilities to localities to offer the local rates as collateral security for loans advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners?

THE FIRST LORD (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Communications are now passing between the Treasury, the Public Works Loan Board, and the Board of Trade on the subject of Harbour Accommodation; but

Mr. Jackson

I am unable at present to give the right hon. Member any definite information as to the increased facilities which he desires to obtain for the construction of harbours; but if the right hon. Gentleman will repeat his Question in the course of two or three weeks I hope then to be in a position to give him an answer.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)—CHARING CROSS ROAD.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government will consider the question of securing the strip of ground behind the National Gallery, and extending into the Charing Cross Road, for the extension of the National Gallery of Paintings?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The strip of ground lying between the National Gallery, Charing Cross Road, and Hemming's Row, is already the property of the Government. It is not at present in contemplation to purchase any more land for the extension of the National Gallery.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881 AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the evidence which is referred to in, and upon which the Report of Earl Cowper's Land Commission is based will be circulated?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The evidence is in two parts, one of which is being prepared in Ireland and the other in London. I am informed they will be circulated without any delay.

THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—THE DAUNTSEY CHARITY.

In reply to Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he could not interrupt the debate on the Rules of Procedure for the purpose of discussing the

Scheme of the Charity Commissioners with regard to this Charity. An opportunity, however, should be afforded; and until this had been done he would pledge himself that the scheme should not come into operation.

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—THE ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I wish, Sir, to put a Question to you upon a point of Order, in reference to the adjourned debate on the Rules of Procedure. The Rule reads—

"That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.'"

There are three Amendments on the Paper to omit the words, "if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained," and there are three other Amendments to insert other words after the word "made." The Amendment of the hon. Member for South-East Lancashire (Mr. Leake) provides that the Motion may be made—

"By a Member of the Government, or the mover or seconder of the Motion then in Debate, or the mover or seconder of an Amendment thereto."

That of the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) provides that it shall be made "by the Leader of the House," and a third Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for the Eye Division of Suffolk (Mr. Stevenson) provides that it may be made—

"By a Member of Her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, or by the mover or seconder of the Motion or Amendment thereto at that time in Debate."

What I wish to ask is, whether these Amendments ought not to be taken before the Amendments to leave out, "if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained?"

MR. SPEAKER: I think the House will see that the Amendments standing in the names of the hon. Members for South-East Lancashire, Mid Tyrone, and the Eye Division of Suffolk should take precedence of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) to leave out, "if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained," inasmuch as they come after the word "made."

PARLIAMENT — THE NEW RULES OF
PROCEDURE (1882) — RULE 2. — AD-
JOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF
MALVERSATION).

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.):
Mr. Speaker—Sir, I ask leave to move
the adjournment of the House for the
purpose of discussing a definite matter
of urgent public importance—namely,
the action of the Corporation of the City
of London in corruptly expending public
money in order to influence the decisions
of this House.

The pleasure of the House not having
been signified—

MR. SPEAKER called on those Mem-
bers who supported the Motion to rise
in their places; and not less than 40
Members having accordingly risen—

MR. HOWELL proceeded: Mr.
Speaker—Sir, I do not make this
charge lightly, nor would I have inter-
vened in this manner had there been
open to me any other method by which
to call attention to a subject so grave
and so far-reaching in its consequences.
Had the City Corporation been under
the Municipal Law of England, another
method would have been open to me;
but the Corporation of the City of
London is not governed by the Mu-
nicipal Law of England. A statement
has recently appeared in a number of
London and Provincial newspapers,
wherein it is alleged that a large sum
of money—corporate funds of the
City of London—was expended by a
Special Committee of the Corporation
for the purpose of preventing the pass-
ing of a Bill for the better government
of London, brought in by the late Go-
vernment. In the article referred to I
find the name of an hon. Member of this
House—namely, the hon. Baronet the
Member for the City of London (Sir
Robert Fowler). I have given the
hon. Baronet private Notice of my in-
tention to call the attention of the
House to this subject, in order that he
may be in his place to hear my state-
ment, and not be taken in any way by
surprise. It is not a pleasant task; but
I hope to be able to do what I consider
to be my duty in a way that shall not
be personally offensive to anyone, in or
out of this House. The article alluded

to—a copy of which I hold in my hand
—distinctly alleges that a large sum of
money was spent in getting up a bogus
movement, by bogus conferences and
bogus meetings, by hired lecturers, and
attended by hired audiences, for the
purpose of opposing and defeating a
measure then before this House. It is
further alleged that tickets were forged
in order to get possession of meetings
lawfully called for a lawful purpose,
with the view of interrupting and up-
setting such meetings, and of moving
amendments to the resolutions proposed
thereat. Now, Sir, if the allegations
made in the published statement to
which I have referred are true, in sub-
stance and in fact, I hold that it is a
corrupt expenditure by a public body
for an unlawful purpose, and is equiva-
lent to an attempt to unduly in-
fluence the decisions of this House.
I do not assert that those allegations
are true. On the contrary, I hope that
an investigation will be instituted by
order of this House, and that explana-
tions will be given which will satisfy this
House in respect to the charges so cir-
cumstantially made. I hope that the
hon. Baronet, and other Members of
this House, whose names are mentioned
in connection with these scandals, will
be able to dispel the suspicions which
have been aroused. Members of this
House should, like Cæsar's wife, be
above suspicion; and so also, indeed,
should be the members of the Corpora-
tion of the City of London, and all other
Municipal and Local Bodies. If the
source of law and administration should
be tainted, corruption will spread
through the body politic, poisoning
and destroying all that is good and
noble in those institutions of which we
are all so proud, and which we hope to
see handed down unimpaired to our
successors. In the absence of any offi-
cial denial to the allegations I am
obliged to assume that the accounts
published are generally accurate. No
contradiction, so far as I know, has ap-
peared from any of those specifically
mentioned, which controverts the main
facts as stated. The absence of any
such disclaimer justifies me in bringing
the matter before this House. If ex-
planations are given in this House which
will render any further inquiry unneces-
sary so much the better, and I shall
have done a public service in enabling

the hon. Baronet and others to show that the charges made are unfounded, and that the money alleged to have been spent was not spent in the manner described. My assumption of the general accuracy of the published accounts must not, however, be regarded in the light of a reiteration, because I am not responsible for the statements, nor for their publication. But, Sir, before taking action with reference to this matter, I asked permission to inspect the documents upon which the allegations are founded. I have seen the documents, and I am bound to tell the House that, in my opinion, they tell a very sad tale indeed. They indicate, on the face of them, a corrupt expenditure of public money for the purpose of promoting a bogus movement and the manufacture of fictitious public opinion, in order to defeat an important measure before this House—a proceeding which I should think is altogether unparalleled in the political history of this country. I refrain from going into all the details of the expenditure which I have examined, as I do not wish to weary the House. I shall only refer to a few samples of the expenditure. But I may state that in the space of one year some £15,000 were spent by the Special Committee, and other items in the previous year's accounts show some £5,000 more, or a total expenditure of some £20,000. I have been over those accounts, and I think that the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London should give some explanation in relation thereto—he being a leading Member of the Special Committee which was responsible for the expenditure. I will refer to a few specific items—

1. An entry appears in the published accounts thus—

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Remembrancer, Disbursements by order of the Special Committee	5,800	0	0
Town Clerk, Sir J. B. Monckton, ditto, ditto, extra assistance	..	200	0 0
City Solicitor, Sir J. Nelson, ditto ..	..	2,950	0 0
Total ..	£8,950	0	0

I leave the other expenditure, and take these items specifically, because Mr. Remembrancer, and, I think, the other officials named, have a peculiar relation to this House, with regard to public measures affecting the City; they are able officially to appear in opposition to Bills—a privilege not accorded to any other Municipality in the United Kingdom. Now, let us see how the expenditure of this sum of money is accounted for. The chief items of expenditure may be classified as follows:—

(1) Hire of halls; (2) printing and stationery; (3) payment of speakers; (4) Committee expenses; (5) cost of stewards (query chuckers out); (6) hire of audiences; (7) cost of advertising the resolutions passed at the bogus meetings and conferences; (8) remuneration of the Secretary, £80 per month, very moderate salary of £960 a-year; (9) remuneration of reporters.

The meetings to which I shall call attention are—

(1) Battersea—Bolingbroke Hall, May 17, 1884; (2) Brixton Hall; (3) Peacock Tavern, Islington; (4) Conferences—Bouverie Street, June 2, 1884; and of delegates from West London Workmen's Organization, May 13, 1884; (5) Hibernian Club, Lisson Grove, Paddington, June 8; (6) Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, May 12, 1884; (7) the Kensington Town Hall meeting, May 24, 1884; and (8) Westminster Town Hall, June 13, 1884.

Let us see how this works out—

a. Hire of halls—

£ s. d. £ s. d.

Battersea—Bolingbroke Hall, May 17, 1884	..	2	2	0
F. Sabine, organizer	..	5	0	0
W. A. Coote, services ..	..	3	3	0
b. W. O'Phelan, speaker	..	2	2	0
C. Wilson, speaker	..	2	2	0
—Twist, speaker	2	2	0	
Captain Ffound, F.R.G.S., ditto	2	2	0	16 11 0
c. Services of Committee	..	12	0	0

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
d. Services of stewards	1	10	0	13	10	0
f. Attendants to make meeting				15	0	0
g. Payments to reporters				3	13	6
h. Petty cash as per book				7	7	11½
Total	£58	4	5½			

Printing and stationery seems not to have been required in this case.

Advertisements of this meeting appeared in *The Times*, *Daily News*, *Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, *Standard*, *Advertiser*, *Globe*, *Echo*, and other papers.

Resolutions were also forwarded to Members of this House—as, indeed, they should be from so important a meeting and expression of public opinion.

	£	s.	d.
2. Brixton, Hire of Hall	3	3	0
J. J. Booth, for Lecture	3	3	0
A. J. Dadson, Chairman	2	2	0
F. Sabine	2	2	0
W. O'Phelan	2	2	0
W. A. Coote	2	2	0
— Twist	1	1	0
	12	12	0
Reporters	2	2	0
Expenses of attendants to make meeting	13	15	0
Total	£31	12	0

3. Peacock Tavern, Islington. — The entry of expenses for this meeting is very simple, as follows:—T. Donati, meeting at Peacock, £6 4s. The reason being, perhaps, that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood knew nothing of it; but the resolutions supposed to have been passed were widely advertised, lengthily reported in *The City Press*, and copies sent to the Members of this House.

4. Paddington, Hibernian Club, Lisson Grove.—June 8, entry in accounts, O'Phelan, Hibernian Club—see *St. James's Gazette*—£5. This was the expression of Irish opinion, and cheaply done, compared with other meetings.

Mr. Howell

5. a. Conference of London Democrats, held at 29, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, under the presidency of W. F. Sabine. Entered in the accounts thus—June 2, Democratic Conference, Sabine and friends, £5; Price (reporter), £1 1s.

As the resolutions passed at this distinguished conference were several and important, of course the cost was a mere bagatelle—only £6 1s. Five persons only were present.

b. Conference of Delegates from West London Workmen's Organizations, held at the Montpelier Tavern, May 13, 1884. At this important conference a "Mr. Peters" presided, the same person, presumably who, in a letter published in the newspapers, is addressed as "My dear Peters," by Lord Salisbury. At this conference 13 persons were present. The prominent speakers were, in addition to the distinguished chairman, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Price, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Chandler. An eye-witness of this conference avers that drinks were freely paid for at the bar, and at another public-house, by the two chief speakers.

6. Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, May 12, 1884:—This was an important meeting. The hon. Member for Devonport presided. The noble Lord the Member for the Ealing Division of Middlesex delivered a vigorous and lengthy speech. The hon. Member for Preston also assisted on the occasion; as did also Lord Algernon Percy, recently a Member of this House. Very important letters were also read from prominent and leading statesmen in this House. The occasion, it appears, was to hear an address by Mr. Oakey Hall, formerly Mayor of New York, and, it is alleged, one of the famous Tammany Ring. The expenses in this instance betoken a public meeting—

	£	s.	d.
The Hall cost	13	10	0
Printing	34	14	0
Bill Posting and Boardmen	41	16	8
Advertising	57	19	0
Total	147	19	8
And paid to Kenny—132 men	32	10	0
Services of Committee and Expenses	12	0	0
Stewards—outsiders	2	15	0
Gross Total	195	4	8

Numerous other items of expenditure are recorded, mostly for breaking up peaceable meetings and moving amendments by hired speakers, supported by hired bands of men imported purposely from other districts. For example, on May 20, 1884, a determined attempt was made to break up a meeting at the Bridge House Hotel, the platform being stormed, but unsuccessfully. For this work £26 15s. were paid, the particulars of which are set forth in the accounts. On May 29 and 30 similar interruptions were attempted at Bermondsey and Walworth, and £15 3s. are entered for services, &c. by Mr. O'Phelan, Mr. Coote, and Mr. Sabine.

7. The supreme effort was, however, reserved for the Kensington Town Hall meeting, on May 24, 1884. The total cost of this organized disturbance is entered at £93 12s. 6d.; but I shall further remark on totals immediately. Let us see what the accounts set forth first.

	£	s.	d.
Organizers, Speakers, Canvassers, and Stewards ..	25	7	0
Reporters, Shorthand Writers and Clerks ..	12	0	0
Assistants—Imported Disturbers	26	19	6
Personal Expenses and Petty Cash	12	6	2
Wagonette	1	1	0
Bill Poster	1	2	0
Printer	3	6	0
	82	1	8

With regard to the nature of this disturbance we have now some evidence. I have here the documentary evidence of witnesses who saw, as they aver, batches of men paid, primed with beer, and their fares paid from the Temple Station. With the details of this I need not trouble the House. If an inquiry is instituted this evidence can be sifted and tested. The Association which promoted these irregular and unlawful proceedings engaged in another mode of attack. The men referred to endeavoured to promote bogus movements in favour of the incorporation by Charter of Greenwich and Westminster, and other places. I leave Greenwich, as a political opponent of my own had to do with that, and refer only to Westminster. The meeting in the Town Hall, Westminster,

on June 13, 1884, appears to have cost the "Association" nearly £100. £50 12s. 6d. seems to have been paid for stewards, &c., £10 10s. for Committee; Mr. Hearne, for organizing, superintending, and speaking, £14 14s. I need not further allude to details. Now, Sir, it might be said that the expenditure for those conferences, meetings, importation of workmen foreign to the locality to disturb peaceable meetings, and the like, was found by the small Association, with a high-sounding name—namely, "The Metropolitan Ratepayers' Protection Association," more properly described as the Metropolitan Peaceable Meetings' Disturbance Association, if we may judge by the action of its more prominent officers and agitators. One fact will dispel the illusion as to funds. The offices were at 42, Palace Chambers, Westminster; the Council numbered among its members many eminent men—Members of this House—and others. The *bona fide* subscriptions and donations amounted to £26! It expended, according to its books and accounts, in 1884 down to July 31, £3,040 11s. The difference between the contributions and the expenditure was paid to the honorary Secretary of the Association by cheques. I have seen the books, and the bankers' pass-book, and I think we can trace the cheques and certain signatures. I mentioned just now that I should refer to the total amounts further on. The published statement to which I have referred does not give a full account of all the payments. For this reason—that some of the cheques, many of them perhaps, were paid not to the "honorary Secretary" of the Association, with a salary of £80 per month, but were paid direct by the City Corporation officials to some of the men whose names are mentioned—the patriots, whose services are given for and against so many movements, in the interest of the working classes. The payments to the Press for advertisements amount to a very large item. One paper especially seems to have been favoured. Its reports were long and gushing. Fortunately its influence is not great, outside a narrow area. I need not pursue the subject further. It has not been a pleasant task to me. I have brought it before the House as a matter of public duty. Purity and honesty in public life are dear to me, and always have been. The fair fame of this House

is dear to me, as dear as to any Member of this House. I am anxious also for the fair fame of our Municipal and Local Institutions. For these reasons I ask that explanations shall be given, or that an investigation should take place into all the allegations. It appears that a member of the Common Council — Mr. A. C. Morton — has demanded an account of the expenditure of the public money by the Special Committee to which I have referred. He is reported to have said that the Special Committee were ashamed or afraid to report to the Council as to how the money was expended. In my opinion it will be for the public advantage that the expenditure should be explained. Why refuse? If nothing is wrong, publicity will allay suspicion. But the refusal to explain will not smother the scandals which are afloat; on the contrary suspicions will be confirmed, and the last days of the Corporation will be overcast by doubt and mistrust. I earnestly urge that the matter should be cleared up, in the interests of all concerned. I thank the House for the indulgence and attention accorded to me. I hope that I have not in any way transgressed the rules of fair criticism in my speech or allusions. I hope, further, that I have said nothing to hurt the feelings of any hon. Member of this House, or of any right thinking person out of it. I make no charges personally; I insinuate nothing; I take the allegations as they are, and simply challenge explanation, or invite inquiry. A complete vindication of the honour and purity of our public life will give me more satisfaction than such disclosures can do. I commend the matter to the earnest attention of this House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 "That this House do now adjourn." —
 (Mr. Howell.)

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): Sir, I have, in the first place, to thank the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Howell) for his courtesy in giving me Notice, some time ago, that he intended to bring this matter forward. I received a note this afternoon, intimating that he proposed to select the present occasion for doing so. I would venture to suggest, Sir, that the more natural course would have been for the hon. Member to move for a Committee of Inquiry in this House. In regard to the matter, I have listened with great care

and attention to the remarks of the hon. Member. I do not apprehend that he stated that he is personally acquainted with the allegations he has brought forward, nor has he given the names of any persons who are personally acquainted with them. He has only spoken of eye-witnesses. Well, Sir, I can only regard the statements that are made as anonymous tittle-tattle, which deserve the reply that was made in an earlier portion of the evening to a Question put to a right hon. Gentleman below me in regard to anonymous statements. I think that charges contained in anonymous statements, whether affecting a Minister of the Crown or a great public body, ought to be made with the names of those who make them attached to them. I think that they ought to be supported by the names of those who make them. The hon. Member has interested the House with the statement he has made; and if he likes to move for an inquiry, I can assure him, on behalf of the Corporation of London, that we do not shrink from inquiry. There is only one thing that I think we have a right to stipulate for; and that is that if this House thinks the matter is sufficiently deserving of attention to justify the appointment of a Committee, that that Committee should be one which should possess the confidence of the House and of the public. I feel, Sir, that we have a right to ask that three right hon. Gentlemen from the Treasury Bench and three right hon. Gentlemen from the Opposition Bench shall take part in such a Committee, and that it shall be a Committee composed of eminent Members of the House, in whom not only the House, but the public and the Corporation of London will have the fullest confidence. Sir, having said so much, I will not detain the House longer. I have described the statements as "anonymous tittle-tattle," and after that I do not think I need take up the time of the House. I am well aware that many hon. Gentlemen opposite would not complain if the whole evening were taken up with this question; but after what has been stated about Obstruction I do not think I should be doing my duty if I were to further take up the time of the House.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The hon. Baronet who has just sat down has carefully refrained from denying the accuracy of any one of the specific charges

made, and I am very glad that he has so refrained. There were two statements made by the hon. Member who moved the adjournment from which I absolutely disagree. One was, "I do not assert that these allegations are true;" and the other, "I feel that the right hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London could not have been aware of the expenditure." On my responsibility as a Member of this House, I accept the challenge put forward by the hon. Baronet. I am ready, if an inquiry, with power to examine witnesses on oath, and to compel the production of bankers' books and cheques, be granted, to prove that money has been corruptly expended in the direction, if not in all the details, put forward by the hon. Member who moved the adjournment; and I undertake specifically to connect the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London with the issue of City funds under conditions which compel knowledge on his part that they were corruptly used for the purpose of influencing the decision of this House. I do not think that I should be consulting the dignity of this House, after having made a specific charge, if I were to utter any word of taunt; but I do not pretend to think, with the hon. Member who moved the adjournment, that it may be possible for the hon. Baronet to acquit himself. If the means of investigation on oath—*[Opposition cheers and laughter.]*—yes; no one more than the hon. Baronet should insist on the oath. I only said "on oath" because I have read, in connection with one of the names referred to, evidence given which, if correctly reported, was, within my own knowledge, untrue, and was associated with cheques which I can trace. On an inquiry such as I ask, I will show expenditure from the knowledge of which the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London cannot disconnect himself. I will not do more than make that distinct and clear pledge; and I am sure that if such an inquiry be granted, which I understand the hon. Baronet to challenge, I can prove the statement up to the hilt.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London has said that the statements made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green are mere anonymous tittle-tattle, and has said that anybody responsible for them should give his name. Well, Sir, I am respon-

sible for them, and I give my name. I was asked to publish these statements, and I naturally asked for information and evidence respecting them. I was given the book of the Secretary of the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association, of which the noble Lord the Member for Ealing (Lord George Hamilton) was the Chairman. This book was in shorthand. It contained all the statements of the payments made to individuals, with their names, by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association. I was also given a bank-book of the Secretary, showing how that money was paid, and through what bank it was paid. I was informed—and I believe truly informed—that the money was placed at the disposal of the Secretary of the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association by the late Sir Thomas Nelson, the City Solicitor. Now, I naturally turned to the accounts of the City. The accounts, I believe, are not given to the public, but there is no great difficulty in obtaining a copy of them. I found what my hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green has stated, that there were the payments in the City accounts. My hon. Friend has pointed out that the sum of £5,800 was disbursed by order of a Special Committee appointed to act against the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—disbursements by the City Remembrancer of £5,800; besides disbursement for Parliamentary agents of £630; counsels' fees, £500; printing and advertising, £750. In addition to these, there were—Printing, £200; hall-keeper, £100; Town Clerk, £200; Sir Francis Wyatt Truscott, Chairman of the Special Committee, £100; and this particular sum of £2,950 to Sir Thomas Nelson. I was further given letters from City officials to the Secretary of the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association, in order to show the connection there was between the City Corporation and this Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association. I have these letters, this book of payments, bankers' book and other papers of the Secretary, locked up in a burglar-proof safe, and there, Sir, they will remain until we come to some agreement respecting this Committee, which, I understand, the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London says he will agree to. It seems to me the only difference is that my hon. Colleague asks

that the evidence shall be taken upon oath. I suppose the hon. Baronet will not object to that.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER: Not so far as I am concerned.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I hope before this debate is closed we shall have some declaration from some Member of the Government—possibly from the noble Lord the Member for Ealing—that the Government assents to this Committee. I will lay before the Committee these books, and they will form their own judgment with respect to them. But it seems to me that after the statements made by my hon. Friend, and the facts I have given, and the positive fact that I have these documents in my possession, some inquiry ought to be made into this abominable expenditure.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) said, that his hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green would be only too pleased to accept the Committee which the hon. Baronet wished for. He was surprised that the City Corporation should from 1884 down to the present time have allowed accusations with regard to these bogus meetings to be made against it, and to have appeared in print, without attempting to disprove them. In 1884, a publication, with responsible men at its back, had made these charges as to the expenditure of City moneys in support of bogus societies. As secretary of the Islington branch of the Municipal Reform League, he had had some experience of what was done at meetings in 1883-4. One meeting held by the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association at the Peacock Hotel, Islington, was of a most bogus character, while at one of the League gatherings they had to send for the police to remove roughs brought there from all parts of London to break up the meeting. He did not suppose that hon. Members from the country knew of the serious magnitude of this question; but there certainly was a very definite reason why it should be dealt with at that particular moment.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) said, he wished to supplement the information given by his hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell). The gentleman to whom his hon. Friend referred, but whose name he did not give, was Mr. Stoneham, who was engaged in obtaining a Charter for Greenwich. As to him, it was said in

the Press at the time that he received money from the City of London for the purpose. At that moment he was Chairman of the Coal and Wine Dues Committee; and he appeared not very long ago, in conjunction with the hon. Baronet the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg), as the head of a deputation to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) on the subject of those dues. It was wished by the deputation to continue dues that were repugnant to the feelings of the great majority of the people of London.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Perhaps it will be just as well that this discussion should close. Therefore, I will state in half-a-dozen words what course Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to sanction. Serious charges have been made by hon. Gentlemen opposite. These charges have, so far as my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London is cognizant of them, been denied by him. [*Cries of "No!"*] At any rate, my hon. Friend intended to do so. I thought he had done so; but if his words were not, in the opinion of hon. Gentlemen opposite, capable of that interpretation, he has since then given me authority to make that statement on his behalf. The Government will be ready to assent, if the House wishes it, to a full inquiry into this matter—an inquiry which will not confine itself to the operations of any one particular Association. With that statement I should be content to sit down if the senior Member for Northampton had not pointedly alluded to the fact that I was Chairman of an Association known as the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Protection Association. It was an Association which, no doubt, was a rival of the Municipal Reform League Association. The hon. Gentleman who opened this debate said he had a great objection to the manufacture of bogus public opinion. What constitutes bogus public opinion? A bogus agitation is an agitation which is conducted for the purpose of misrepresenting the opinions of those in whose midst the agitation is conducted, and of deluding Parliament as to what are the feelings of the people. The subject upon which this agitation took place was in reference to the municipal reform of the City of London. Now,

there are 60 Members who represent Metropolitan constituencies, and 50 of those 60 hold my views and 10 hold the views of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The fact is that an agitation was carried on in many parts of London under the auspices of the Municipal Reform League which was absolutely misleading. It so misled the late Parliament that the late Prime Minister and the Home Secretary introduced a Bill which they believed was in accordance with the opinions of the majority of the people of the Metropolis; but the moment the Metropolis was appealed to, it rejected the Bill by an overwhelming majority. Never in my experience of Parliament—and I have had the experience of 20 years—has there ever been so successful an attempt to mislead the Imperial Parliament as to the opinion of a locality as was effected by the Municipal Reform League. The Metropolitan Ratepayers' Protection Association was an organization which was started for the purpose of enabling the other side of the question to be stated. That opinion, as hon. Gentlemen know, was stated with considerable energy at the last two Elections. Statements have been made that a considerable amount of money was spent in corruption. If such expenditure took place, those who indulged in it ought to be punished. But when the hon. Member for Northampton unguardedly said that he had certain books in a burglar's safe—

MR. LABOUCHERE: No; I said a burglar-proof safe.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: When the hon. Gentleman made that statement it seemed to me an appropriate one, for I read a statement in the journal of which he is the editor, and which we may well know is called *Truth*, which indicated that the person who made these statements had either stolen or purloined the books. Therefore, I hope the House will not go away with the impression that statements made upon authority like this are reliable.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I can assure the noble Lord that the books were neither stolen nor purloined.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I may remind the noble Lord that I have pledged myself to prove the charges I have made before a Committee of Inquiry.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I stated that upon evidence which was

afforded by the article in *Truth* these statements are not of a reliable character. No names, so far as I know, are given in support of the allegations which it contained. Therefore, the House must not be under the impression that if we assent to this inquiry we do so because we in any way believe these allegations to be well founded. They have been made publicly in the House, and the person against whom they are mainly directly has denied them. [*Cries of "No!"*] At any rate, he has challenged substantiation before a public Committee, or some body specially constituted for the purpose. The Government will acquiesce in a Motion for an Inquiry; but the Motion must be of such a nature as to enable those upon that Committee to go thoroughly and impartially into the whole circumstances of this agitation and the allegations which have been made.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Mr. Speaker, I took no share, nor did my Friends who are near me, in promoting the discussion of this subject at the present time, because, although we perceived at once that the matter was one of the greatest importance, yet we did not feel satisfied that it was one which ought to be brought forward to the prejudice of all other important matters and the Business before the House. But my hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) has stated his case to the House in a manner which I should have thought it was impossible to mistake. As I understand it, Sir—and if I am wrong I shall be corrected—my hon. Friend did not propose that there should be an inquiry into the whole proceedings by all persons who may have taken part in agitation on one side or the other with respect to promoting or opposing the passing of a particular measure. Of course, if we are to have an inquiry into the general proceedings it must be an inquiry into the proceedings of both sides; but the hon. Gentleman's proposal, if I understand it aright, has nothing to do with such an inquiry. As regards what is termed the manufacture of public opinion, a use of illegitimate argument might be deemed manufacture of public opinion, and probably each Party in this House might indulge rather largely in this belief—that the Party with which he does not agree is very much given to the manufacture of

public opinion. That is an important subject, and it embraces, as it appears to me, almost all proceedings upon almost all questions by almost all parties in this country at almost all times. My hon. Friend proposed, if I understood him rightly, a perfectly definite matter; and so he was understood apparently, and I think indubitably, by the hon. Member who followed him. What I understand the Mover of this Motion for Adjournment to contend was this—that he had proofs in his possession, or he believed that it could be shown, that the public funds had been used by a public body for a purpose which was undeniably illegitimate and apparently corrupt. It is a misuse of trust by the greatest Municipal Corporation in the country; that is the matter now charged. I agree entirely with the noble Lord in the opinion that it is desirable that this discussion should cease; but I am bound to say I think it can only do so upon one perfectly distinct and definite understanding, and that is that Her Majesty's Government will assent to the appointment of a Committee to examine into the specific charges which have been brought by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green and the hon. Member for Northampton against the Corporation of the City of London. If any charge amounting to corruption, if any charge involving the betrayal of a public trust, can be brought against the Ratepayers' Protection Association or the Municipal Reform League, by all means let such charge be included in this inquiry; but there is not the least reason to suppose from anything stated in this House during the present debate that such charges will be or can be brought. If my hon. Friend can prove his case it still would not be proved, as far as I can understand, against private persons—matter of which serious notice would probably be taken by this House, although on this subject I will not venture to give at the present moment a definite opinion. The question before us is the misuse and misappropriation of the public funds of a great Corporation. That which the House desires to know is whether Her Majesty's Government are disposed to assent to an inquiry with that object in view, and with a field so defined. I would venture to suggest to my hon. Friend that he should define in few and simple words what is

the charge he makes, and against whom it is alleged, and then the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House will be in a position to judge whether he can or cannot assent to such an inquiry on the part of Her Majesty's Government. Sir, although I point to the Municipal Corporation of the City of London as an object of this charge, I entirely feel how exceedingly wrong it would be if we recognized at the present any fact more than that certain Members of this House have made certain allegations which appear to constitute a *prima facie* case so as to require an answer. I will not assume that anyone is to blame; but considering the extreme gravity of the matters laid before us and their perfectly definite character it will be our duty to obtain an understanding before this discussion closes that this debate shall not evaporate in mere generalities, and that we shall, as becomes the character of this House, put matters in a train which will insure a thorough search into allegations of the gravest and most important nature.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I will lose no time in replying to the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). The Government will be perfectly prepared to adopt the course which the right hon. Gentleman has suggested; and if the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) will place on the Paper the charges he makes and the Reference to the Committee which he desires to obtain, the Government will at once consider the proposal of the hon. Gentleman, and will indicate the course which they intend to take. [*Cries of "Oh, oh!"*] Hon. Gentlemen appear to suppose that there will be some hesitation on the part of the Government in securing a full and complete inquiry into allegations which affect the character of a great Corporation and of an hon. Friend of mine in this House. Sir, there will be no such hesitation; but in a matter of this kind, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has said, it is only fitting that we should see the precise character of the charge to be brought and the Reference which it is proposed to be made to the Committee. There is one remark which I wish to make, and that is with reference to

the constitution of the Committee. The hon. Baronet behind me has suggested that there should be on it a certain number of Gentlemen from both the Front Benches. It seems to me that in a matter of this kind, which involves grave allegations against an hon. Member of this House and against the Corporation of the City of London, the Committee should be nominated by the Committee of Selection, and that no Party elements should be permitted in the constitution of this Committee, which is a Committee intended to try a question judicially.

MR. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.) said, he must utterly repudiate, and he desired to challenge, the assertion of the hon. Gentleman the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) that the hon. Baronet the Member for the City (Sir Robert Fowler) could be specifically connected with a corrupt knowledge of the way in which the money had been spent. Such an assertion could not, by any possibility, be well founded. No man had more conspicuously received the confidence of the citizens of London than his hon. Friend, who might be well content to pit his past life against the assertions of the hon. Member for Northampton.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) said, he would urge that the scope of the inquiry should be so enlarged as to include the proceedings of the Primrose League, as a body which, by corrupt practices and intimidation, worked in antagonism to the welfare of the country.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said, he confessed that he was not quite satisfied with the answer of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), who had given a promise which was fair-sounding to the ear, but which, he thought, was dead in the spirit. What he wanted to know was whether the right hon. Gentleman would assent now—not at some future date—to the terms of a Motion calling for a Committee to inquire into certain definite and specific matters? He would say nothing whatever regarding the statement of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City (Sir Robert Fowler), for even his political opponents, as well as his supporters, must have felt considerable pain and humiliation at the spectacle which he presented to the House. But the noble Lord the Member for

Ealing (Lord George Hamilton) had endeavoured to lead off the House on a red-herring trail. The question which the House had to decide was not merely the abuse of public funds by a public body, but definite charges against Members of the House. The noble Lord had been very eloquent about the action of hon. Members on that (the Opposition) side; but when a Member on that side sat with the cast-down look of conscious and trembling guilt, it would then be time enough for the noble Lord to use his *tu quoque*. No such charge had been brought, and the Leader of the House showed less sense than usual of the dignity of it when he tried to lead his followers away from the real charge.

MR. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) said, he was desirous of offering a few remarks to the temporary absence of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), who had gone out of the House to prepare the terms of the Motion which he intended to make presently. He desired also to protest against the action of the noble Lord the Member for Ealing (Lord George Hamilton). So far as he (Mr. Caine) was concerned he would resist to the uttermost any proposal to bring the Municipal Reform League into the inquiry. That League was an Association supported by private contributions; it had a treasurer and auditors, it published an annual balance-sheet, and against it, up to that moment, not a single word of blame had ever been uttered. The question before the House was an alleged misappropriation of public funds on the part of the Corporation of London. He knew that for some time past a huge conspiracy had existed against a certain class of meetings in the Metropolis, and was glad that that conspiracy had been tracked home. He did not understand the hon. Baronet the Member for the City (Sir Robert Fowler) to contradict the charges which had been brought against him, but the charges against the Corporation remained uncontradicted. He trusted that his hon. Friend (Mr. Howell) would insist on the Reference to the Committee being confined simply and solely to the one issue.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that he had been at meetings which had been broken up by roughs. He contended that an organized system prevailed for the breaking up of meeting in opposi-

tion to the Bill of the late Government, and that the Municipal Reform League was connected with it.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) said, he was not afraid of the inquiry taking a general scope. He would be glad if the inquiry included the affairs of the Municipal Reform League—with which he was connected—the Primrose League, and the Conservative Association in the City. He believed the present representation—or misrepresentation—of the Metropolis was due to the Conservative Association in the City. He would make a statement that would be borne out by the hon. Member for North Paddington, who had just spoken (Mr. Lionel Cohen). During the Election of 1885 a certain person was sent to a constituency, and that person had been for five years an uncertificated bankrupt. Charges had been made against this man by his own father-in-law of misappropriating Stocks. These facts were known to the governing body of the Conservative Association in the City, and yet they said they would go on with their man.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he thought the Committee should have power to inquire where the money came from to support certain Socialists and other candidates at the last Election?

MR. HOWELL asked whether the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would accept and agree with the terms of the proposed Reference, which he begged leave to submit, and which were—

“That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon certain charges, brought under the notice of this House by Mr. Howell, Member for the North East Division of Bethnal Green, and Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for the Borough of Northampton, alleging improper use and malversation of public funds of the Corporation of London, by or with the consent of members and officials of such Corporation :—That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they do take evidence on oath :—Power to send for persons, papers, and records.”

MR. W. H. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I think that it is almost without precedent for a Member of the House to call upon the Government to say, during the short time he has been absent from the House, whether they will be prepared to accept a Motion the Notice of which has just been read. My own inclination would be to accept it; but I do not think it is reasonable that I should do so until I have seen this Notice in print, and thus

I should be enabled to consider it, and to state the course which the Government would be prepared to take under the circumstances. In saying this, I am sure the hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Gentleman opposite will not suppose that I wish to evade any responsibility, nor to lengthen the debate, or desire to postpone the question. I feel, however, that I have a responsible position here, and that I should not be justified in at once assenting to a verbal statement. Therefore, if the hon. Member will put his Notice on the Paper, I will give an answer on Thursday morning.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Perhaps I may be permitted to say—as I made an appeal to Her Majesty's Government—that I think the demand of the right hon. Gentleman is a fair demand. This is a serious charge—and as, on the one hand, my hon. Friend may see fit to amend the words of his Motion, so I think that, on the other hand, it is quite fair that the right hon. Gentleman should have an opportunity of considering—and carefully considering—the terms of Reference, in justice to all the parties concerned. I would, therefore, suggest that the Motion for the adjournment of the House should be withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SIXTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on the Main Question, as amended,

“That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, ‘That the Question be now put.’ Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate :

“When the Motion ‘That the Question be now put,’ has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the

Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to move, as an Amendment, in Rule 1, in line 1, after "proposed," to insert—

"Arising out of the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House."

The reception which the Government give to this Amendment will enable the House to see whether they will be really satisfied with anything less than the most arbitrary power. It will be apparent that, even if the Amendment is accepted, the Government will be able, at any time, to apply the Rule of Closure to any subject which they may consider so urgent, or so important, as to entitle them to favourable consideration at the hands of the House. This Amendment will not prevent them from applying the closure to the Rules of Procedure, or to an Order, or Coercion Act, or any other subject or Bill on which they may represent the Government opinion of the House. Upon Fridays, if this Amendment is accepted, it will still be possible to apply the closure to any proceeding, even in Committee of Supply. Looking back at my experience of the House, I should be surprised, indeed, to find it contended that after two Motions have been disposed of on a Tuesday, or two Bills on Wednesday, any Member would feel inclined to apply the closure upon a third Motion or Bill. And I should also be very much surprised to hear any argument put forward to convince the House that an effective majority should have the entire control of the Business of the House, and that no Amendments should be debated that was not favoured by the majority. I maintain, further, that on the merits of the question I have a conclusive case. The development of the mind of the Government on the question of closure

has been curious and instructive. I see the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) in his place. Very little more than a year ago the right hon. Gentleman was personally responsible for bringing forward a series of Resolutions on the part of the Government, in which no proposal whatever for closure was made. What has happened since then to effect so complete a change in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman? Is it because the Irish Members put him into Office a few months before, and because they turned him out when they found that the goods were not according to sample? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) also brought forward Resolutions, and he proposed a closure which was not to take effect at any time, but only at certain times. The draft Resolutions proposed by the right hon. Gentleman when Chancellor of the Exchequer in March last contained the following proposal:—

"At half-past 6 of the clock at Morning Sitings, and at midnight at Evening Sitings on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and at half-past 5 of the clock on Wednesdays, the proceedings on any Business then under consideration shall be interrupted, or the House shall, if in Committee, receive the Chairman's Report; and such Business shall, in the case of Morning Sitings, except on Wednesdays, stand adjourned until the Evening Sitings on the same day; and in the case of the Evening Sitings, and on Wednesdays, shall stand adjourned until the next day on which the House shall sit, unless at the times before-mentioned a Motion shall be made that the Question then under consideration be now put, which Motion shall be decided without Amendment or Debate."

Now, in the first place, we find that the Chief Secretary for Ireland, when putting forward Resolutions on behalf of the Tory Party, made no proposals whatever for closure, and the right hon. Member for Derby proposed, on behalf of the Liberal Party, that there should at certain times be a closure. The Select Committee in their Report amended the proposal of the right hon. Member for Derby, and this is the form in which they put it—

"That at midnight on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and at half-past 5 of the clock on Wednesdays, the proceedings on any Business then under consideration shall be interrupted, or the House shall, if in Committee, receive the Chairman's Report; and such Business shall stand adjourned until the next day,

[Sixth Night.]

when the House shall sit, unless the Business under consideration at the times before mentioned, shall be the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House, and a Motion shall be made that the Question then under consideration be now put which Motion shall be decided without Amendment or Debate."

I wish to call attention to this curious and remarkable fact. The proposal of the right hon. Member for Derby was that at certain times a Motion for putting a Question should be put, and that Motion was limited by the Select Committee to a proposal that the Motion should not be put unless the Business under consideration at the time should be the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House. How was that Amendment dealt with? Three of my hon. Friends who sat with me on the Select Committee supported it on the 13th of May last. Has anything happened since then to induce the Government to change their mind in reference to the question then before the House? The Motion made in the Select Committee was that the Question should not be put unless it related to the first or second Order of the Day, or to a Motion standing first or second on the Order Book of the House. By whom was that proposition made? On referring to the Records of the Committee, I find that it was made by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and that it was carried in the Committee by a majority of 1. Among the 15 Members of the Committee who carried that Motion I find the names of Sir Walter Barttelot, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Sir James Fergusson, Sir William Hart Dyke, Sir John Gorst, Sir John R. Mowbray, Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Raikes, Mr. W. H. Smith, and Mr. E. Stanhope; so that among the 15 Members of the Select Committee who carried the Amendment, which was the same as that which I now propose, will be found the names of nine Members of the present Government. Therefore, I think that unless the Government can show some conclusive ground for changing their minds, I am entitled to say that they are bound now to accept from me the Amendment which a few months ago they themselves introduced in the Select Committee.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words "arising out of the first or

Mr. Sexton

second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): As the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) has done me the honour to quote me, it is desirable, perhaps, that I should address a few words to the House in regard to the Amendment. The hon. Member asks me, in the first place, if I did not, in the proposals I submitted in February, 1886, abstain from proposing the closure. I certainly did not propose the closure on that occasion. At that time I thought that the existing closure would be quite sufficient; but subsequently, when the proposal was made to the Select Committee that there should be a fixed hour for adjournment, I recognized that arrangements must be made for the possible application of a thoroughly efficient closure at that hour. Therefore, when the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), acting on behalf of the late Government, included this proposal in the New Rules, I accepted it in principle, but endeavoured to limit its application, so as to guard the rights of minorities. What was the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman? It was not only to institute a fresh kind of closure at any moment during the ordinary period of our debates, but it was also to introduce a special closure at the time fixed for the termination of Business. It appeared to me and to my right hon. Friends who acted with me on that Committee that, in order to guard against surprises, there ought to be some check upon the application of the closure at the hour fixed for the termination of Business. We thought it was perfectly possible that if the first or second Order or Notice of Motion had been discussed for a certain time in the course of the Sitting of the House, that at no more than half-an-hour before the termination of the Sitting some fresh Order or Notice of Motion might be brought under the consideration of the House, and that the closure might be demanded upon that Motion or Bill, and applied without an opportunity being afforded for reasonable discussion. In fact, the closure might, under such circumstances, be applied without hon. Members, who did

not happen to be in the House at the moment, having had any reasonable notice, either that such Motion or Bill would come under consideration at all, or that, if it did, the closure would be applied to it. Therefore, I proposed to the Committee that the application of the closure should be confined to the Bills or Notices of Motion standing first or second on the Order Book. The hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) asks me why I and my Colleagues have changed our opinions in the matter. I will tell him. The explanation is very simple. The Government think that they have discovered a still better safeguard against surprise than that provided by the Amendment which was moved in the Committee, and that safeguard consists in the necessity of obtaining the consent of the Chair before the closure can be applied. That, Sir, is the reason for our change of opinion. Believing it to be better than the proposal adopted by the Select Committee, we have withdrawn that proposal and substituted for it the present one, which requires the consent of the Chair.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid) : I think the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland is altogether unsatisfactory, and in no sense the explanation we might have expected. The whole system of divided responsibility between the Speaker and the Minister of the Crown as to enforcing closure is here brought out in the worst shape. The right hon. Gentleman says that we shall have a safeguard in requiring the previous consent of the Speaker to be obtained before the closure can be applied. But the Speaker or Chairman of Committees will be able to get up the moment it is proposed to be applied, and the consent of the Chair can thus be given to its application at once. That will give the Leader of the House a means of escape and a running away under the shelter of the Chair from the censure of the House. One reason which is given in justification of this proposal of closure is that there is no further necessity for the provision introduced by the Chief Secretary in the Committee on Procedure last year, and which my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) now submits to the House for its acceptance, because it is asserted that the Speaker and the Chairman of

Committees will always be proof against Ministerial influence. It is because I am afraid that that may not always be so, and that such a danger may arise, and because I feel strongly of opinion that the whole reference of the question of applying the closure should be taken away from the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees, that I and my Friends insist now that proper safeguards should be placed on this Rule, so as to protect persons who have introduced Bills placed far down on the Paper, and for the purpose of preventing a measure being rushed through the House without adequate discussion, and forced into law without the opinion of the House having been practically taken upon them. I think the Amendment of my hon. Friend is one which deserves the favourable consideration of the House, because we shall be called upon to discuss most important Amendments further on which will throw the whole responsibility of the closure on the Leader of the House, or some Member of the House who is not the Speaker or Chairman of Committees. That being so, it will be necessary for us to take care that no unfair application of the closure is made by the Ministry of the day, and there is no means we can think of which will have a better effect in securing a fair discussion of all Bills brought before the House than placing beyond the operation of the closure those Orders of the Day which cannot possibly be reached in time to allow the House to discuss them at fair length. Take the case of Wednesdayittings. There may, perhaps, be 10 Orders of the Day, relating to Bills standing for Second Reading. We know very well that rarely on a Wednesday more than two Orders are reached; generally the whole of the day is occupied in discussing the first Order; and frequently we have experienced in this House the obstructive operation on the part of certain hon. Members of talking out a Bill on a Wednesday. What would happen if there is no such provision as my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast suggests? We might go on discussing the Second Reading of a Bill from 12 o'clock on Wednesday until a quarter past 5; a Division would then be taken which would take about 15 minutes; the second Order would consequently be reached at half-past 5, and having only 15 minutes to discuss it in, the closure

[*Sirith Night.*]

might be moved and the Question put, and the Bill forced through the House without the slightest discussion having taken place upon it. I have been told by a gentleman from South Australia how the application of the closure in the South Australian Legislature works. On one occasion a question of some importance, which was made the means of turning out the Ministry, was raised. A Motion was brought forward in a speech of considerable length by the Gentleman who moved it, and immediately upon the conclusion of that speech a Member of the Legislative Assembly got up to make a reply. But not one word of that reply was allowed to be heard, and a Division was taken without any remarks from anybody except the Mover of the Motion. Now, I maintain that the same thing might happen in regard to any objectionable matter introduced into this House by some hon. Member whose Friends are in a majority, and who introduced it on a Wednesday with the consent of his Friends. As soon as the speeches of the Mover and Seconder were finished it would be possible to put the Question and to close the discussion. This would be prevented if the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), to afford opportunities for debate on all Motions that may be moved, is accepted; but otherwise I am of opinion that we must fall back on something of this kind. I trust that my hon. Friend will persist with his Amendment, and that he will take the sense of the House upon it by a Division.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I have listened attentively to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and his explanation of the change of front on the part of the Government is certainly of a somewhat singular character. But, in my opinion, I do not think it a proper principle to substitute the personality of the Presiding Officer of this House for the written law. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman who presides in the Chair is always a man of high character and experience; but I cannot see how we can have from him personally the same guarantee in regard to the performance of his duties in the Chair as we should have by the written words of the law. I maintain that the principle favoured by the Government—this golden principle of the personality of the Speaker—is of a

highly invidious and dangerous character. Let me remind the Government that all the privileges of this country have been fought and won by opposition to this principle of personality. If the principle of a Sovereign is to be entertained at all it would be as well to dispense with this House altogether, and go back to the good old times when the Sovereign had complete control over the State. The Tory Party, when not in Office, proposed that on a first Motion, or Order of the Day alone, no closure should be applied. The Tory Party were then in a minority in this House, and that was the proposal they made in the Select Committee. Now, however, they turn round and say—"We have discovered a much more splendid principle—namely, that the Speaker shall be the judge whether the Question has been adequately discussed or not." I would ask what the opinion of the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin)—who always opposed the closure—is with regard to the proposal of the Government? I do not think he was a Member of the Select Committee; but I should like to point out to him what may happen under this proposal of closure. A debate upon a first Order may have been carried on up to 10 o'clock at night, when the Order is disposed of and the second Order reached. We may have an excited Speaker in the Chair, although I am far from saying that the Speaker would ever be excited. Then suppose that at 11 or half-past 11 o'clock the Speaker was of opinion that the second Order of the Day had been adequately discussed, and he was prepared to take a Division, a proposition to apply the closure would then be made, and by this means you would secure the manufacture of what is called "the evident sense of the House." That would be very easily manufactured by a number of Tory Members—Hallobolooists I think I may call them—coming for the special purpose of getting up a row. With a man of excited temperament in the Chair, a most unsatisfactory state of things might be brought about. Take, for instance, the Judicature (Ireland) Bill, which was on the Paper last night. It is a measure of great public importance. Suppose it had been down as the second Order of the Day, and suppose it was ripe for discussion at 2 o'clock in the morning, which was the hour at which

it was reached. I would put it to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can believe that proper justice would have been done to the Representatives of Irish opinion by taking that measure at 2 o'clock in the morning, providing that the Government were anxious to push it forward and we were desirous of resisting it? Would it have been fair, in such a case, to have imposed the *clôture*? Yet that is what may happen, and you will either have Gentlemen on the Tory Benches getting up an altercation with the Speaker, or whispering in his ear. I do not say that you will have that state of affairs; it is altogether foreign to our present mode of Procedure; but what I maintain is that you may have it, and in the year 1900 it might be most unfortunate for the Parliament of the day to have men going behind the Chair and whispering in the ear of the Speaker. When once you have begun this unfortunate system you will open the door to a great deal of abuse, and you may constantly have the Speaker pronouncing an opinion that a state of things has arisen which would justify the *clôture*. Therefore, the only safeguard we can have is that the *clôture* shall only be applied to the first and second Orders of the Day unless the third Order shall have been taken up at a reasonable hour of the night. My hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) has proposed an Amendment to this Rule in terms of great moderation, and he said very little as to the change of front which has been made by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and which shows so strong a contrast between their present attitude and that which they took up last year. But the moderation of my hon. Friend ought to lead to a greater desire on the part of the Government to accept the principle of his Amendment. If they are unable to accept its exact terms, I think I can suggest a method by which the proposition of my hon. Friend can be carried out, not, perhaps, with the same effectiveness as if it remained unamutated, but in a form which he might not be unwilling to accept. My suggestion is this—to add after the word “debate,” at the end of the first clause, the words—

“Provided, That the *clôture* shall not be applied to any Order of the Day or Notice of Motion after 10 o'clock, after the first Notice of Motion or Order of the Day has been under discussion.”

I think that would meet the view which my hon. Friend has in proposing this Amendment, and at the same time remove some of the disabilities which have been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. Having been a Member of the Select Committee, I am able to say that nobody worked more hard upon it than my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast, except, perhaps, the First Lord of the Treasury. Everybody admired the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman attended to the discharge of his duties, and watched with assiduousness, for the benefit of his Party, every proposal that was submitted. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has left out of his mind the fact that the Conservative Party may some day or other be out of Office again? Perhaps he expects that the transcendent genius of the Tory Party will enable them to keep the ship afloat for an interminable time. We were struck with the business capacity of the right hon. Gentleman in the Committee? Why, then, does he not display the same business capacity in this House? There was a Whip issued when this particular Amendment was proposed in the Committee. The Tory Party were exceedingly anxious that it should be adopted. So anxious were they that the Irish Members were whipped up, and the Amendment was carried by our votes. As a matter of fact, it was only carried by a majority of 1, and that one was myself, for I undertook a long journey in order to vote for the proposal of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. My labours seem now to have been altogether thrown away, and we appear to have wasted our sweetness on a desert Committee. Having enabled right hon. Gentlemen to effect all they desired, now that they are in power they fling us overboard. I trust that under the circumstances the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will be prepared to meet us in the same spirit as that which he manifested in the Committee. The Irish Members were then acting as an auxiliary of the Tory Party against the right hon. Member for Derby. We knew that that right hon. Gentleman was extremely anxious for more stringency than the Tory Party were willing to assent to. We were then opposing even a mild form of amendment of our Rules. Perhaps we

[Sixth Night.]

were wrong. It might possibly be desirable that we should have greater stringency in the Rules of this House when we get into power, and then right hon. Gentlemen opposite may find that a very unfortunate state of things exists. I am afraid there will be no more convenient manufacturers of the "evident sense of the House" than the Irish Party under a Home Rule Government. I can well conceive, if this Amendment is rejected, the vehemence which on some other occasion my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast and other Irish Members will exhibit, and the turbulent spirit they will display in shouting down some rising Member of the Tory Party and calling for the clôtüre. I can imagine my hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar), or some other experienced Member of the Irish Party, sitting in the Chair and dealing with the Amendments which may be proposed by the Tory Party.

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to keep strictly to the Amendment, which is to confine the closure to questions proposed in reference to the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I have no desire to detain the House longer. All I have attempted to point out is the desirability of securing full and complete discussion, by whatever means it may be effected. What I wish to see is the adoption of the proposal of my hon. Friend in principle—that without adequate debate no clôtüre shall be applied, except to a question arising out of the first or second Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion. I trust that the First Lord of the Treasury will endeavour by some means to indicate what his views on the matter are.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): The hon. Member for North Longford, who has just sat down, has described how my unfortunate proposals for the clôtüre in the Committee upstairs were defeated by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, who, when he found that it was impossible to exclude the clôtüre altogether, adroitly introduced into it limitations which made it utterly worthless and unworkable. Hon. Members from Ireland have always been openly and altogether opposed to the clôtüre, and of course they would natu-

rally support any Amendment proposed by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, the object of which was to destroy the working efficiency of the clôtüre as proposed by the late Government. I am very sorry they succeeded in the Committee in, practically speaking, making the proposal which was intended to facilitate the Business of the House, I will not say absurd, but at all events unworkable. Having, for my own part, a desire to institute a sincere and workable closure, I did my best to resist that proposal; but the alliance of right hon. Gentlemen opposite with the Irish Members was too strong for me, as it had been on a former occasion. An alliance of this kind has on more occasions than one upset Governments, and therefore it was quite possible that it might upset the closure; and that was really what they succeeded in doing about a year ago. But I adhere to my former opinion on the subject. I think the Amendments then introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland were very bad Amendments, and I opposed them. Hon. Members from Ireland were consistent in supporting them, and they are consistent in supporting a similar Amendment now. I am consistent in opposing the Amendment now, and the only persons who are absolutely inconsistent are Her Majesty's Government, who are abandoning their previous proposals.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 83; Noes 209: Majority 126.—(Div. List, No. 32.)

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name—to insert after "proposed" the words "and opportunity afforded for debate thereon." The object is to provide that whenever a Question has been proposed in the House it shall not be in the power of this, or any future Government, to close the discussion without allowing any opportunity for criticism to those who may feel disposed to make it. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), in the course of his observations the other night, stated frankly that it was not his intention—and he could not believe that it would be the intention of any Government—to exercise any power placed

Mr. T. M. Healy

in their hands in an arbitrary manner. The right hon. Gentleman subsequently stated that he intended to look into the matter and see what words could be introduced as a safeguard upon a point which we looked upon as one of the greatest dangers of this Rule. Such words of limitation have not yet been introduced into the Rule. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has had time to consider the qualified assurance which he gave to the House on the subject or not. Of course, if he is in the position to say that after the remarks which have been made in the House on this particular point he sees the value of the criticism which has been offered, and is prepared to insert some such qualification as is stated in this Amendment, I should have no object in pressing the Amendment further; but the assurance given by the right hon. Gentleman was not absolutely definite, and, therefore, I move the Amendment in order to afford him an opportunity of explaining the course he intends to pursue. In future it is quite possible that this enormous power may be in the hands of a Government who may be less generous and less just in their action than the present Government. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to say that he is prepared to carry out substantially the qualified assurance he gave the other night, so that I may be spared the necessity of going further with this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting, after the word "proposed," the words, "and opportunity afforded for Debate thereon."—(*Mr. Molloy*.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have no hesitation whatever in giving the assurance which the hon. Gentleman asks for—that there is no wish on the part of the Government to stifle debate, or to prevent adequate discussion, on any question which may be brought before the House; but I am of opinion that if these words are inserted they will tend still further to delay and hinder and protract the progress of Public Business. The Government will undertake to introduce words which will fully protect freedom of debate. It is their intention to make

a proposal based very much on the suggestions of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget), and my right hon. Friend the Member for North Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth), who desires to provide that there shall be such discussion secured for the minority that in the opinion of the Speaker and Chairman of Committees is necessary to preserve the privileges of hon. Members of this House. There is no desire to interfere with them in any shape whatever. I have so strong an opinion on the subject, that if I felt that these Rules could be used by any Government to put a stop to proper discussion so as to enable them to pass a measure by a simple majority, I would be no party to it. I do not believe, however, that these proposals involve anything of the kind. They are framed solely with a view to forwarding the Business of the House in a reasonable and practical manner, and I believe their operation will be to secure time for the discussion of questions that are now wholly neglected, and to facilitate the progress of Business which cannot at present be undertaken at all. I trust that after this assurance the hon. Gentleman will withdraw the Amendment, and allow us to proceed with the further Amendments that remain on the Paper. Perhaps it would be for the convenience of the House that I should read the Amendment now standing on the Paper in the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire. It is as follows:—

"A Member rising in his place may move 'That the Question be now put,' and if it shall appear to the Chair that, having due regard to the rights of the minority, it is proper that the sense of the House, or of the Committee, should be taken, as to whether or not the subject has been adequately discussed; he shall so inform the House or the Committee, and, in such case, shall forthwith put the said Question 'That the Question be now put,' which shall be decided without Amendment or Debate."

I do not bind myself to accept those identical words but I will bind myself to accept the spirit involved in them, and also in the Amendment of the right hon. Member for North Hants—

"That, in giving the consent of the Chair, the Speaker or the Chairman (as the case may be) shall have regard to the general sense of the House or of the Committee, and likewise to the fair and reasonable privileges of the minority."

Our only object is to secure that there

should be such an amount of discussion as in the judgment of the House will secure a reasonable and fair elucidation of any question brought before us.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): I am afraid we are going on too rapidly. The right hon. Gentleman says he is prepared to adopt substantially the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire. I think it now becomes necessary for the Government to tell us what are the words they intend to adopt, because the words proposed by the hon. Baronet and those proposed by the right hon. Member for North Hants, which the Government also intend to adopt, are very different. As the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has just told us that he intends to accept the spirit of both, I think he ought, in fairness, to give us the exact words.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): We enjoy at present the right of debate—a right not depending on any casual Member standing up in his place and moving that the debate be closed, but a right depending on the grant of liberty of speech in this House which we have enjoyed from time immemorial, in conjunction with a wise discretion exercised by the Chair in regard to the manner in which everybody may exercise that right. It is now proposed to take that right away from us, and to leave the liberties of individuals; nay, more, even of Parties, in this House, entirely at the mercy of the First Lord of the Treasury, or somebody else who may bring forward a Motion for the prevention of further debate. I should like to know, if we are to be allowed adequate debate, what means of securing it can be suggested better than those proposed in the Amendment which has been placed upon the Paper by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). Is it desired to take away all opportunity for debate? If it is not intended in any circumstances that may arise to take away all opportunity of debate, and to deprive Members, practically, of all liberty of speech—if it is not intended to be a weapon to silence hon. Members, and take away all the ancient Privileges of this House, what objection can there be to the introduction of these words? The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury says—"Trust me with this weapon for closing your mouths; trust me with this gagging apparatus; but

you may be sure that I shall never put it in force unless the circumstances are such as to require the use of some such stringent measure? If it is not intended to make use of this gag, why should we hand it over to the right hon. Gentleman or to any other Government? If it is not intended to stop discussion before there has been an adequate debate, why ask for power to do so? There was never a tyrant in the world who did not maintain that the tyrannic power he exercised was for the benefit of the people he ruled. From Nero downwards I never heard of any tyrant who did not assert that the most severe of his measures were measures that were forced upon him by the exigencies of the case; and if we pass these Rules, we shall have no security that they will be exercised in a rational and proper way, and without injury to the liberties of those whom it may be desired to over-ride. Her Majesty's Government say they will never use such a power at all; but what may happen when there is strong political feeling and great Party heat upon some great measure before the House—a measure, perhaps, endangering the existence of the Government, or some measure which the Government are earnestly bent on pushing forward against the wish of a large minority of the House? It is not in quiet days like these, and in comparatively unimportant circumstances, that a Rule of this kind is wanted; but it may be found desirable to use it on an occasion when the heat of debate is greater than usual, owing to the deep national importance of the question under consideration. We want an explicit declaration on the Rules of the House to which we can appeal, and ask the judgment of the Chair. We are prepared to trust your impartiality, Sir, and we wish to have this declaration; otherwise the liberty of the individual may be taken away, and the liberty of this House. We desire the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to exhibit in something more than general professions of good-will and respect for our liberties that he intends to carry out what is proposed by this Amendment, either by accepting it now, or stating that he is prepared to accept something equivalent.

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.): I should like to hear some explanation of the

effect of the acceptance by the Government of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somerset (Sir Richard Paget).

MR. W. H. SMITH: The Amendment of the hon. Baronet will require some modification, but I will give the House the full meaning of the alteration which we propose to make. It is intended to give the Speaker and the Chairman a complete veto on the Motion made to put in operation the *clôture*, on the ground that it may be an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority; and in order to provide that the Chair shall inform the House that in the opinion of the House the subject should no longer be discussed. In this way the closure will be put on the responsibility of the mover, subject to the veto of the Speaker or the Chairman, who will be able to say that that veto is given on the ground that the Motion is either an abuse of the Rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority, and that the subject should not be further discussed.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Would not the words of the Amendment proposed have the effect of excluding the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), which is a little further down on the Paper, and which proposes to leave out the words "If the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained?"

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury finds himself unable to state to the House off-hand the terms of his Amendment, and that being so, *a fortiori*, it must be extremely difficult for other hon. Members of the House to understand his proposal. Everyone must feel the preponderating importance of the Amendment we are discussing. Let me call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the position in which he has placed the House. An Amendment is moved in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), which Amendment, as well as that of the hon. Member for Bedford, raises the distinct question of whether the consent of the Chair shall or shall not be required. These two Amendments have been on the Paper for some days in succession,

and to-day, for the first time, we see on the Paper an Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset (Sir Richard Paget). We have had hardly any time to consider that Amendment, although it may absolutely exclude us from discussing the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford. Then, whilst we are endeavouring to find out the meaning of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet, down comes the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury and proposes an Amendment to the Amendment, the terms of which he cannot give to the House. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman is the last man in the world who would wish to take an unfair advantage of a political opponent; but if he desired to take advantage of the natural lack of alacrity of his opponents to understand an Amendment not on the Paper, he could not have done more than he has done. One of my hon. Friends proposes that we should adjourn for an hour. If the right hon. Gentleman will consent to such adjournment, and will undertake, at the expiration of an hour, to understand his own Amendment and explain it to the House, our position would be clear. At the present moment we are in a perfect fog.

MR. SCLATER - BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I confess I should prefer the Amendment as I originally put it on the Paper. The Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset does not appear to me particularly happy or complete, and even if that objection could not be taken, they are not the words the Government are finally prepared to adopt.

MR. SPEAKER: There is great inconvenience in discussing an Amendment on a subsequent part of the Paper, and I would suggest to the House that the discussion should now be taken on the first words of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget)—namely, "A Member rising in his place." That would not preclude the subsequent Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I appeal to the hon. Member who has moved the Amendment now before the House and intimated his willingness not to press it on to-night on my being prepared to give

an undertaking. I have not moved anything, nor has the hon. Baronet (Sir Richard Paget) yet moved anything, and I, therefore, do not know that I am quite in Order in referring to what we may subsequently propose, but if the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) will withdraw his Amendment we will meet him in the sense I have described, and this undertaking, I think, will fully meet the engagement I have entered into. We shall then approach the first words of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire, which practically raises the question in the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford. I understand that the hon. Gentleman objects to the interposition of the Chair. Well, the words of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet are, "if it shall appear to the Chair;" and, if the Amendment of the hon. Baronet precedes that of the hon. Member for Bedford, the latter will be able to obtain his point by challenging these words I have quoted. I should be prepared, if it were in Order to do so, to postpone the Amendment of the hon. Baronet until we have taken that of the hon. Member for Bedford; but that is a matter for the House to consider, and is a matter concerning the Order of Procedure of which you, Mr. Speaker, are the best judge. I would point out that I am not entirely responsible for the difficulty that has occurred. When the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork is removed we shall be in a position to deal with the greater question that has been raised.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I understand that the right hon. Gentleman suggests that the general discussion as to the interposition of the Chair should be taken on the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford, and I must say that that appears to me the natural and proper course. If the House agrees with the hon. Member, there is an end of the question; but if, on the other hand, it differs from him, then would be the time to consider what modifications should be introduced into the Rule as at present proposed.

MR. MOLLOY: On the question of the withdrawal of this Amendment I am placed in rather a serious difficulty. I said I would withdraw it if the engagements of the right hon. Gentleman

were fulfilled; but I naturally meant fulfilled in the sense of hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House. If I were to withdraw the Amendment, it would be altogether gone, and I do not know what the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would be. It is now a quarter past 8 o'clock, and you, Mr. Speaker, will in a short time be leaving for the usual interval. I think in that interval the terms of the Amendment proposed by the right hon. Gentleman should be shown to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford, in which way some conclusion might be arrived at. If I were to withdraw the Amendment now I should be guilty of the foolish act of giving up a bird in the hand for two in the bush.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (MR. GOSCHEN): There are three proposals before the House—that of the hon. Member for Cork; that of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire; and, finally, the largest question of all, whether there is to be any interposition of the Chair at all. I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend opposite that we shall gain time by deciding first whether the Chair is to interpose at all. After that is decided we could proceed to consider what other safeguards might be put in. We could leave the subject of adequate discussion until the question of the interposition of the Speaker is decided.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The proposal is that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford should be moved as an Amendment to the proposal of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire.

MR. GOSCHEN: The most simple course would be to go on with the Amendment of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, formally raising the question contained in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford on the words "and if it shall appear to the Chair."

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): The hon. Member's Amendment is an Amendment in itself, and, if that is taken, I shall not have an opportunity of raising my Amendment at all. The Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire raises a variety of issues; but I only desire to raise one, and it would be a much more simple

course to allow my Amendment to be put as it appears on the Notice Paper.

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH: It is impossible to take the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire in a different order to that in which it appears on the Notice Paper. If the hon. Baronet is not here when his name is called, the other Amendments can be proceeded with.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): As the House has got into an inextricable entanglement, I would ask you, Sir, if you would be kind enough to follow a practical suggestion and, as this is about the usual hour for you to retire, now allow the House half-an-hour of recess?

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget) will include so much new matter that I think it would be well for the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to move the adjournment of the debate. If we do not adopt such a course but deal with the Amendment in a haphazard manner, we shall get into a state of interminable chaos.

MR. W. H. SMITH: It seems to me there is more misapprehension than real mistake in the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Amendment before the House is that of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork. When that is disposed of, the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford will come on for consideration. He will not move it in the form in which it stands on the Paper, as that would now be impossible, but I would give him a fair opportunity by moving the Amendment of the hon. Member for Somersetshire as far as this—

"A Member rising in his place may claim to move 'That the question be now put,' and unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse to the Rules of the House."

What we desire to affirm is that the Chair shall have a positive duty to discharge in connection with putting the clôtüre to the House. That is the position of the Government; but the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford wishes to dissent from that view, and it appears to me that he will be able to do so, and to move his Amendment when we arrive at the words "unless it shall appear to the Chair." The hon. Member can move to leave out these words,

and such Motion will be equivalent to that he has put upon the Paper—namely, to strike out the words "if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained." I may say to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite that I undertake to bring up words to meet the case of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I would suggest that the simplest way out of the *impasse* would be for the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to use his influence with the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire to get him to withdraw his Amendment, so as to enable that of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford to be proceeded with. That will be the most natural course to take, for the reason that anything the hon. Baronet desires to do can be equally well done if the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford is defeated. It seems to me that we have here an ingenious manoeuvre on the part of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire to obtain precedence over the hon. Member for Bedford.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I object to the right hon. Gentleman imputing motives. He says this is an "ingenious manoeuvre." I can assure him that I contemplated no such thing. I saw a difficulty, and this Amendment suggested itself to my mind as likely to overcome it. I framed my Amendment myself and put it down myself, and it should be decided on its merits. I am not prepared to withdraw my Amendment, at any rate without further consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: It might, perhaps, be convenient for me to make a suggestion, though I do not say that what I propose will be sufficient. If the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire were moved as a substantial Amendment, any Amendment could be moved to it, and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford could move to strike out of the Amendment words similar in effect to those he proposes to strike out of the Resolution—the words "unless it shall appear to the Chair." That would raise the whole question of the intervention of the Chair—the whole point in dispute.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): But, Sir, the Amendment I should have to

move to amend, it seems, would not be the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire, but that Amendment coupled with one by the right hon. Gentleman who sits behind him (Mr. Selater-Booth). The Government put this before us, and ask us to discuss it at a minute's notice, without seeing the words. The most convenient course, it seems to me, would be for the hon. Baronet to postpone his Amendment, and allow me to move the one I have had on the Paper for a long time. It is not unlikely that we should finish the discussion on that to-night, then tomorrow the hon. Baronet could put his Amendment on the Paper, and we should be in a position to give it proper consideration.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): The difficulty in the way of adopting that course is that we cannot get to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford without passing the words, "a Motion may be made," which were in the original Rule, but which will not be in the Rule as the Government propose that it shall stand. If we take the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford, and it is negatived, the words "if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained," would stand part of the Rule. That is not the present proposal of the Government. I am afraid there is no possible alternative but to adopt the usual course of taking the Amendments as they stand on the Paper.

MR. M. J. KENNY: Would it not be possible to postpone the Government Amendment, as the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House just now suggested? It would be found very easy to bring it on after the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): There is a difficulty in the way of the course proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. M. J. Kenny), whereas there is none in the way of the course suggested by you yourself, Sir, and the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. The plan proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House would enable the hon. Member for Bedford to raise the whole question he desires to

raise. The words the Government would propose to move are—

"A Member rising in his place may claim to move 'That the Question be now put,' and unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, and the Chairman shall so inform the House or Committee, thereupon the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided upon without Amendment or Debate."

The whole question of whether or not the Chair shall be allowed to interpose can be raised on that.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: What is it we are going to amend—the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire on the Paper, or some shadowy Amendment to be substituted for that, to be evolved out of the inner consciousness of the Government? We cannot carry the words of the Government Amendment in our memory.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I should be glad to take the Division on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford were it possible; but Mr. Speaker has ruled that it cannot be taken. Let us then proceed to dispose of the Amendments which remain on the Paper in their natural order; and then, if it be possible to meet the views of the hon. Member for Bedford, and to give him the clear issue he wishes to raise, I can only say that I shall be most ready to do it.

MR. WHITBREAD: Would it not be possible for me to move to omit all the words of the Resolution down to the words, "consent of the Chair having been previously obtained?" That would leave a door open for the hon. Baronet's Amendment, and allow me, in the first place, to raise a clear issue.

SIR RICHARD PAGET: I have no desire to prevent a clear issue being raised; but it can be done in the way that you, Sir, have already pointed out. If the Amendments are taken in the sequence in which they are on the Paper, the hon. Member for Bedford can take issue on my Amendment at the point where it breaks away from his own.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): Any confusion that may have arisen is altogether owing to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House himself, for a more clouded statement than that which has fallen from him I never heard. He proposes to amend the Amendment

of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire, and then to invite Amendments to his Amendment from this side of the House. The more the subject is considered the more it will be seen how necessary it is to have the words of the Government proposal on that Paper. With regard to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork, I should think it would commend itself to anyone who cares for the freedom of debate. If the Rules are passed as they are the independence of the Chair will to some extent suffer, and we shall be unable to look to it for protection, as we have been accustomed to do in the past.

MR. SEXTON: The Amendments of the hon. Member for Bedford and the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire could be brought abreast by allowing the words of the original Resolution to stand down to "made," in line 2. After that word it would be competent for the hon. Baronet to move, "by a Member rising in his place." The hon. Member for Bedford would then be able to move first.

MR. GOSCHEN: If a majority of the House voted for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford we should not be able to take a clear issue on the other point. The issue the hon. Member desires to raise could be taken on the words, "unless it shall appear to the Chair," in the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Amendment now before the House were withdrawn, I should call upon the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to move his Amendment, and on that the hon. Member for Bedford could move his Amendment. I now leave the Chair for the usual time.

MR. MOLLOY: Mr. Speaker, I hardly know what position we are in. I proposed an Amendment, and thereupon certain suggestions were made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. In fact, I appealed to the right hon. Gentleman not to put me in a position of discussing an Amendment if the assurances he had given to the House were going to be fulfilled. The right hon. Gentleman then rose, and we have been occupied nearly an hour and a-half upon an Amendment which he is about to introduce. So far as I know, the last proposition was that of the hon. Member for Bedford.

MR. SPEAKER: The course that has been pursued has been somewhat irregular. The only course now is to proceed with the Amendment on the Paper until we reach the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset.

MR. MOLLOY: I cannot withdraw the Amendment I have proposed, because no agreement has been come to concerning the safeguards which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has announced his intention of introducing. The power which is given under the Rule as it now stands is the power of crushing out debate altogether. It is a matter for the serious consideration of the House whether they are prepared to give, not only to this Government, but to future Governments in this House, the power and the right to prevent all discussion. It must be remembered that we are not passing a Rule which is to obtain during the present or the next Session only; we are now legislating for the future.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a second time the hon. Gentleman has spoken on his own Amendment. It is quite irregular for him to do so.

MR. MOLLOY: You will remember, Sir, that you called upon me.

MR. SPEAKER: I called upon the hon. Gentleman because I thought he was going to withdraw the Amendment.

MR. MOLLOY: I beg your pardon.

MR. PARNELL (Cork, City): I desire to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my judgment the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House is entirely insufficient and illusory, and not such a one as would justify me in withdrawing any of my Amendments which propose to go in the direction of seeing that there shall be ample discussion. This Amendment which my hon. Friend the Member for Birr (Mr. Molloy) has moved for me becomes, in view of the unsatisfactory nature of the safeguards which the right hon. Gentleman intends to propose when the time is reached, more than ever necessary. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that he does not object to affording opportunity for debating before the closure is applied; but if he does not so object, why does he not put it in his Rule. We examine this Rule from top to bottom and we do not find a single safeguard in it; we simply see the Members of the House

of Commons and the rights of minorities left, or proposed to be left, at the mercy of the Ministry and the majority of the day. Sir, if this Rule is passed, and if we are beaten in our Amendments, we shall die fighting hard. The right hon. Gentleman has not met us in the way we might have expected he would have met us from his antecedents and from his courteous demeanour. I fear the right hon. Gentleman has been led away from the paths of conciliation and concession to his political opponents since the advent into this House of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). I can only liken the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to Faust, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Mephistopheles; and I fear very much that the counsels and seductions of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer have already produced their effect upon the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury; short as has been the time since the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has occupied a seat at the elbow of the First Lord of the Treasury. If the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had been told five years ago, or even last autumn, that he was going to agree to such a Rule as this, much less that he was going to propose it himself, his hair would have stood on end in horror at the suggestion. But, Sir, when Members of Parliament get into Office their old nature forsakes them and they become different beings. They seem to forget that a time may come when they may be in Opposition, and when they will bitterly regret that the love of power prompted them to throw away the safeguards of the rights of minorities. The minorities in the House ought to strive for such protection as I propose; even the so-called Unionist Party, those who have announced that it is above all things their intention to have one Parliament, and to have Irishmen represented, and fully represented, in that Parliament—have shown that they look upon Irish Members as being not so good as themselves, as being unworthy of having the same measure of justice meted out to them as ought to be meted out to an English Party in Opposition. I have seen that the fair play, and the justice, and the toleration which

you extend to your British political opponents are not extended to your Irish political opponents. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members will have full opportunity of debating this question, and I think that if they have got anything to say against the reason and justice of what I am urging they ought to say it when the proper time comes, and address observations to the Chair instead of making inarticulate noises. So far during the course of this debate they seem to have engaged in a conspiracy of silence, and therefore they are not entitled to interrupt me. I maintain that in consequence of the attitude always maintained towards the Irish Party, it is our duty to leave no stone unturned in trying to impress the conscience of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House as to the necessity of inserting suitable safeguards in this Rule. We know how this Rule will operate. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House will bring in a Coercion Bill, and push it through the House by main force regardless of our protests. Now is our time, before we have been gagged and silenced by the action of the Front Bench and the tyrannical power of the majority, to rise and struggle, and to strike and resist with all our might and main before this Rule is passed. I should like to know once more where is the urgency of or necessity for this new Rule; for I must confess I am totally ignorant on the subject. I trust that, in view of the fact that the Amendment as announced by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House contains no single word or suggestion whatever that there should be adequate debate, the right hon. Gentleman will see the necessity of agreeing to the Amendment which has been moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Birr; and of modifying his subsequent proposal in such a way as to secure that fair play for minorities, which is entirely absent from the Rule as it stands.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Government are logically committed to the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) by the words which they propose to add guaranteeing the rights of minorities; though it is also apparent that while there are some minorities they will protect, there are other minorities they will not protect.

The Government have made great strides in respect to closure; last year they were only favourable to its application at half-past 12 o'clock at night, and at half-past 5 on Wednesday afternoons, and only at these times upon certain Motions. But the advance which has been made since last year absolutely amounts to this, that the closure may be put in force at any stage or moment, and almost upon any subject before the House; after one or, perhaps, two persons have discussed a subject the closure can be applied. It seems to me, therefore, that the words suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork are perfectly consistent with the spirit evinced by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, and in my opinion would carry out the right hon. Gentleman's object better than his own words.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): The Amendment which has been proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) is a very simple one, and I think may be discussed by us now without regard to the controversy which may follow as to the action of the Speaker. I, therefore, treat the Amendment as one proposed in reference to the proposed Rule as it now stands, and I am bound to say that it appears to me, looking at it calmly in that way, that the Amendment expresses a true principle. The object of the Rule—as I think it will be agreed by both sides—is this, that when a question has been fully debated it should be in the power of the House, with or without certain safeguards, to close debate. If that is the object, it is only right it should be stated that the closure may be applied only after the question has been so debated. It should not be, at any rate, the effect of the Rule that the closure should be applied when only, perhaps, one speaker had spoken, and when, clearly, there has been nothing which could possibly be called debate. If that be so, surely it is well, in providing for what we mean, to introduce some such words as are now proposed. They cannot possibly do any harm; I think they express really what is the intention of the House, and that intention ought to be expressed if this Rule is to be accepted by all Parties in the House. I am certainly disposed to say that the words proposed by the hon. Member for

Cork are fair and reasonable, and that we should do well to accept them.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): As we understand these Rules they are intended to act against deliberate obstruction, and against undue prolixity. But the silence of hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial Benches, and the refusal on their part to discuss this Amendment, very clearly shows what is the intention of the Government. I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether they contend that a decision ought to be taken without due opportunity being afforded for debate? That is practically what they say by their silence. If they think so, let them have the courage of their convictions. This is how we understand the refusal of the Government to accept the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I trust my hon. Friend will go to a Division. If we are beaten, we shall be beaten, but at least we shall have an opportunity of protesting, not only against this new theory or doctrine which is set up, but against this conspiracy of silence which refuses even to discuss it. It is all very well to talk about safeguards against obstruction and prolixity, but we want safeguards against the majority riding roughshod over the minority.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): We also want a safeguard, and we find a safeguard in the words of the Rule, "If the consent of the Speaker has been previously obtained." I put it to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) whether he really believes that any Gentleman who may be elected to the Speaker's Chair will arbitrarily allow this Rule to be put in force in regard to a subject which ought to be debated?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): It seems that what we require is that in some form or other there should be safeguards for adequate and sufficient debate. I do not express an opinion with regard to the wording of the clause, or as regards the question whether this is the proper point at which such a clause should be introduced; but I do desire to express my opinion that in principle the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) is right. We should put it in such words as imply that when the Speaker gives a decision that decision shall be that in the opinion of the

Speaker sufficient debate has been had.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire): I think the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) can hardly have been in the House during the discussion earlier in the evening, or else he would know that the views of the Government were fairly expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. There is no disposition on the part of the Government to shirk this question. The view of the Government has been stated most clearly and most distinctly. We admit that safeguards are required, and the safeguards which we propose have been clearly indicated, and in the opinion of her Majesty's Government the intervention of the Speaker is most certain to act as a safeguard of a proper and most legitimate character, and one most certain to be exercised for the due protection of minorities in the debates of this House. I have noticed in this debate that several hon. Gentlemen have insinuated that occasions may arise when Speakers may be unduly influenced, and that the rights of minorities will be sacrificed by the Speaker. I have to speak very frankly on this subject. I have sat now in this House more than 45 years, and I have sat under the Speakership of four different Speakers, every one of whom was selected from the Party with which I had no connection, and against whom I was opposed. Looking back, I say distinctly that—so far as my memory serves me—I have no complaint whatever to make against the impartiality and fairness of any one of those Speakers. I repose the most implicit confidence in the fairness and impartiality of any Speaker who is likely to be selected by the great majority in this House to fill that Chair; and my deliberate conviction is that in the consent or the refusal of the Speaker to permit the closure to be put in force, the minority in this House has the best security which it can have for a fair and legitimate discussion of a question in which it may be concerned.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I can only account for the statement of the noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) that the views of the Government were clearly stated by the

right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, by the fact that the noble Lord was not in the House when the views of the Government were made known. I venture to say that the noble Lord is the only person in the House who will stand up and declare that the views of Her Majesty's Government upon this question have been made clear. It is quite evident that everyone was completely muddled by the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, and that the right hon. Gentleman himself was not able to read the notes he had written for the purpose of enabling him to state the views of the Government. The noble Lord has said that guarantees were given by the Leader of the House that the Chair would intervene for the purpose of securing due debate on any subject. Now, that was not at all the promise made to us by the Leader of the House—it was quite of the opposite character to that. It simply went to save the Government from the obstruction which might naturally arise out of a Resolution of this kind if individual Members or minorities in this House had recourse to a practice which the Government wish to retain only for themselves—namely, if minorities should take it into their heads to exercise the privilege of getting up and moving “That the Question be now put.” Of course, we have no such guarantee as that which is proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), which, upon the very face of it, is a reasonable guarantee, and one which no argument can be advanced against. So far as I can see, it is quite possible that the very moment that a Question is proposed in this House any hon. Member may stand up and move “That the Question be now put,” and the concession which the Leader of the House wishes us to believe he has made to the House as an equivalent for the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork is simply this—that where it appears to the Speaker that the Motion is an abuse of the Privileges of the House—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not confining himself to the Amendment before the House, but to an Amendment to be proposed another day.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: I will only say, in conclusion, that if the Government have any real intention of as-

sureing to hon. Members of this House the right to debate subjects brought forward, I fail to see why they should have any objection to the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) can be aware of what was said earlier in the evening, because if he had he would not have said, in answer to my Colleague, that we have the safeguard that an opportunity will be afforded for debate in the terms of the Rule as proposed, inasmuch as it is necessary to obtain the consent of the Chair before the closure is applied. [MR. CHAPLIN: I was not here.] The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, in the course of the somewhat irregular conversation, had promised to amend so as to do away with that consent. The right hon. Gentleman himself did not seem very clear as to the course he intended to pursue; but, at any rate, the only guarantee which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) relies on has clean gone, and therefore I trust we shall have his support in the Lobby.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I congratulate the House on having escaped from a very serious dilemma, and I congratulate the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) upon the firmness he showed in demanding to see the Amendment of the Government in black and white before we proceed to discuss it. We are assured that the Rule if allowed to stand as originally drafted, will not be put into execution to the disadvantage of minorities. Upon what grounds are we to trust it will not be put unduly into operation against minorities? We have the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). I am prepared to attach some importance to the assurances of the right hon. Gentleman, judging from the urbanity he has displayed in the conduct of the Business of the House. I have no doubt, so long as the present First Lord of the Treasury occupies his present position on the Front Government Bench, that this Rule will not be unduly put in force against minorities. Now, we are also asked to trust to the Speaker, and we are told that, judging from the impartiality and fairness which you, Mr.

Speaker, and your immediate Predecessors have shown, the Rule will not be improperly enforced. But we must remember that neither the First Lord of the Treasury nor yourself, Mr. Speaker, will occupy your respective positions always. It has been found necessary in the past for this House and the country to place restrictions upon kings and upon people in high stations, and therefore it is absolutely necessary for the present generation not to abandon their liberties into the hands of any individuals whatever. The noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) has said he has had experience of four Speakers, and that they have always been selected from the Party to which he was opposed. But the noble Lord has never had experience of a Radical Speaker; and it is quite possible that in the near future the Radical Party, numerically small at present, may be in a position to elect the Speaker. We have received the assurance that there will be adequate discussion permitted before the Question before the Chair is put; but I hold it does not rest with the First Lord of the Treasury or the Speaker to say when adequate discussion has taken place. It is provided by the Rules that the evident sense of the House should control both the Government and the Speaker. What is the evident sense of the House? Is it the opinion expressed by hon. Members who, when the bell rings, rush in from the Library or the Smoking Room to outvote those who have paid attention to the course of the debate? Or is the evident sense of the House the opinion of those who return from convivial dinner parties, and with their full-dressed imaginations declare they know more about the subject than those who have been sitting through possibly a wearisome discussion in order to arrive at a just conclusion? The Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork is a very reasonable one, and we can do no better than discuss it to its fullest extent, and then take by a Division what will be the evident sense of the House in regard to it.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I think that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has, at any rate, the advantage of being exceedingly opportune. If the object to be attained is that there should be

adequate debate, it is absolutely necessary that words like the hon. Member's should be introduced in the Rule. There is nothing on which the House can better exercise its talents than the protection of the rights of minorities. I cannot imagine why the Government should object to the addition of these words if they really desire that there should be adequate debate allowed. It appears to me that one of the reasons why the Government are so anxious to prevent the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork being adopted is that they are very recent converts to the closure, and being very recent converts, they are in a fog as to how to put the closure in motion. I hope that even at the last moment the Government will listen to the arguments used and accept this Amendment.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Mr. Speaker, it is a notorious fact that many hon. Members who will take part in the Division have not heard one word of the argument. The question at issue is simply whether the House of Commons is going to retain for itself the privilege of discussing any question that is brought legitimately before it. Now, the words of the Amendment are sufficiently elastic to give the right hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury Bench ample opportunity of applying the clôtüre, while, at the same time, they preserve to us some semblance of the rights for which we covenanted when we became Members of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) adopted a very singular course in regard to this Amendment. He had not one word of intelligible argument to offer against the spirit of the Amendment, and yet he said he could not adopt the Amendment. Why? Simply because it was proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). The right hon. Gentleman went on to say the Government would adopt the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget), but in the form they themselves preferred. He got fast in his elucidation of the intentions of the Government, and left the House in complete ignorance of what he really proposed to do. Now, will the House assent to the principle that there must be an opportunity of debate afforded before a Question is put from the Chair? It is all very well to talk about the pro-

tection that is afforded in the fair dealing of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees. That is a most illusory protection, because there will be the greatest possible temptation to future governments to elect a Party Speaker and a Party Chairman, in order that they may rush their own wishes at a gallop through the House. There can be no reasonable objection to the insertion of the words proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork. What is the alternative of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to this Amendment? It is that words be inserted, providing that due regard be had to the protection of "the minority." I ask the House to particularly mark the words "the minority." There is no body recognized in the House but the Government and the Opposition. Indeed, I think we should be asked to adopt the words, "minorities and Members of the House," so that "the minority" and the "Government of the day" shall not be the only elements of consideration. I maintain that every hon. Member has inherent rights in the House of Commons. I look upon every Member as a possible minority in the House, and I therefore consider that the rights of individual Members ought to be protected. We do not ask, by this Amendment, that the words "after debate, "or after adequate debate," should be inserted; but that the words, "and opportunity afforded for debate thereon," shall be inserted. The House will make a great mistake if it omits to insert these words, which will secure ample opportunity for free debate.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): This is the third time I have listened in the hope that a gleam of probability would appear that the right of speech in this House would be fenced around with some kind of safeguard. And again we have been met with what I may call the sole energy of the Government—the energy of silence. The Government are silent. I ask if they are simply mutes following with pretended sorrow the funeral of Constitutional privileges. A time may come when, possibly in this House, we may look above the Gangway and see disastrous incompetency enthroned as statesmanship; while below the Gangway we may see faction take the place of loyalty to Party. I ask where then will be the

Party who will protect freedom of debate and the expression of opinion? If this opportunity for debate be not given, it is possible that measures of great importance may be passed whilst our mouths are shut. The Ministry of the day may think discussion in this House in times of great international complications is not proper; but I ask if discussion is to be stopped for such a reason. Are the Government in such times to be not merely the libertines, but the autocrats of debate? If that is not the intention of hon. Members I call on them to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): I rise, Sir, to express a hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House will expedite the Business before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has already spoken on this question.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I desire to say a few words with regard to the position in which this House is placed by the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. H. Smith). The only position in which the right hon. Gentleman has left us after a debate of two hours, in which the Irish Party have unselfishly stood up for liberty of debate in this House, is a position of absolute darkness. We shall ourselves very soon be out of all liberty of debate, so that it matters very little what we do; but, at the same time, we are bound to make a certain stand even though in doing so we show undue devotion to the Conservative Party with whom we have been foolish enough to act in the past, and from whom we have met with a base return. The Government seem to suppose that being on the Treasury Bench they will remain there for ever—such is the state of beatitude of the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman is now lying on a bed of roses; last May when he was out of Office and a Member of the Committee on Procedure, he was upon a bed of thorns, and then he was extremely anxious to maintain the rights of minorities, and that nothing should be done to cripple freedom of debate. Again, in 1882, he was asking what security we had in simply appealing to the authority of the Chair. Now he tells my hon. Friend the Member for Cork that he need have no fear, because everything will be safe in the hands of the Speaker;

we are to place full confidence in the authority of the Chair. The noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) seems to suppose that because we have full confidence in the authority of the Chair, we do not need the Amendment of my hon. Friend. But we have no voice in the Election of the Speaker; if we had, we should perhaps have the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) in the Chair. Not that I say, Sir, for one moment that you do not make an excellent substitute.

MR. SPEAKER: These remarks of the hon. and learned Gentleman are scarcely respectful to the Chair.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should be sorry, Sir, to institute any invidious comparison.

MR. SPEAKER: I must call on the hon. Gentleman to leave that line of remark.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I shall certainly be most happy to abide by any ruling you may give, Sir. It is suggested by the Government that we should rely upon the authority of the Chair instead of something stated in the written Rules. I ask the right hon. Gentleman what is his objection to import something which will correspond to this into the Rules? It is surely desirable that when Rules are proposed by the Government they should know exactly what they mean; and by refusing to express this in the Rules, they leave open a point which will lead to interminable conflict with regard to matters of the utmost importance. Instead of that confidence which all Parties in the House have in the authority of the Speaker, you will have conflict with the Chair, and a spirit of criticism with regard to the Chair such as at the present moment we have no idea of. The state of our relations with Mr. Speaker are now of the most happy character, and you propose by refusing to make a written Rule to bring about quite a different state of relations. I hope the Tory Party, however, will remember their Constitutional position in this House, where they have been frequently in minority and will be so again. The Government have not endeavoured to make clear what it is they want; they seem to suppose that we shall infer what that is; but I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to tell us the safeguard he proposes, and to place it on the Paper.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Sir, I do not entirely understand why it is that Her Majesty's Government find it to be their duty to oppose the introduction of these words. I own I should have thought that these words were completely in conformity with the spirit of those Amendments which we are approaching, and with which we have had the distinct intimation that Her Majesty's Government intend to agree. What are these words? They require that there shall be an opportunity for discussion. But that does not imply that there should be discussion. This proposal is simply an intimation to the Chair to the effect that there shall not be that rapidity of action which is entirely to shut out the opportunity of raising discussion if there should be a desire to raise it. It implies that there should be a reasonable pause before the Question is put, in case an hon. Member should wish to discuss any Amendment before the House. The proposal does appear to me completely in the spirit of those Amendments which I hope are about to be settled without any material difference of opinion. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has, I think with very sound judgment, forbore to introduce the obvious wording of "sufficient opportunity or ample opportunity;" all that he says is that some opportunity should be given for discussion, and I am sure that in supporting the insertion of these words we shall be doing no more than supporting a suggestion which is completely in accordance with the spirit of the Amendments which Her Majesty's Government have given us to understand they are ready to admit.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Sir, I think the right hon. Gentleman, who has been for some time absent from the House, can hardly have any correct idea of the object of the amendment we have now before us. We on this side of the House all desire that, whenever any reasonable proposal is brought forward, an opportunity shall be afforded for its discussion at a reasonable length. But the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) assumes that on an Amendment of any character proposed in this House there shall be a discussion. What does that

mean? It means that on every line of every Bill that may be brought forward there shall be discussion; that an amendment may be raised on every item of Supply, and that there shall be a direction to the Speaker that discussion shall be allowed upon every such Amendment. That, Sir, is a suggestion which Her Majesty's Government are wholly unable to accept, and it is one which the right hon. Gentleman and those who think with him have themselves rejected.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Sir, this House has not finally decided as to whether you should be called upon to take part in the question of the application of the closure otherwise than by simply putting the Question. But surely there can be nothing more moderate than the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I refuse to admit that there is any reflection on the Chair when it is proposed that there should be some security for the liberty of debate. I think that the highest compliment that can be made to the Speaker of the House is to say that absolute confidence should be placed in him in interpreting the Rules of the House; and I object altogether to the arbitrary power proposed to be given to the Speaker when it is said that there should be no discretion whatever given to him as to whether debate should ensue on any Motion or not. I think the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) is in perfect harmony with the assurance given by the Leader of the House over and over again; and I am amazed that there should be suspicion thrown on the good faith of those hon. Members who have no hesitation in accepting this Amendment. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork is clear enough; there is security given for debate, and liberty for debate; and it will fall upon you, Sir, or your Successors to determine whether that liberty has been abused or not. I should be sorry to pass this Rule without having security given to us that there shall be absolute freedom left in the House to discuss any Question which may come under discussion in the interest of the country. For these reasons, I shall vote with the hon. Member for Cork.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 186; Noes 241: Majority 55.—(Div. List, No. 33.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Sir, the Amendment which I now propose to move in this place is intended to provide that there shall be an opportunity afforded for the making of an Amendment before the closure can be applied. As the Resolution now stands, it will be possible, before any discussion takes place on the Main Question, or after discussion has commenced on the Main Question and has proceeded for some little distance, and before any Amendment has been moved to the Main Question, with the leave of the Chair to ask that the Question be now put; and if the House so decide by the necessary majority the Question will be put, and that without any opportunity being accorded for discussion. This will very unjustly affect the right of minorities in two different ways. It will affect it in debate on Bills and abstract Motions, and it will affect it in Committees of the Whole House and in Committee of Supply; but it will more injuriously affect the right of minorities in Committee of Supply and in Committees of the Whole House than in any other way. Let us consider the proceedings that would take place in the case of a Bill in Committee. A clause is moved, the Question is put from the Chair, and the Question "That this clause be added to the Bill" may be put from the Chair; the *clôture* may be moved on the Question, and the Question may be decided without an opportunity being accorded to any Member of opposing the clause, which may become part of the Bill without any Amendment whatever. Against such an abuse as this it is that I have suggested the adoption of this Amendment. By its provision will be made that the *clôture* shall not be moved to the original Question, but to the secondary Question. I admit, of course, that all these matters depend very much upon the character, disposition, and feelings of the majority; but those qualities vary month by month and day by day, and they vary also in individuals. You may have a Prime Minister of one sort, and next year you may have a Prime Minister of a different sort; and in the same way, a majority which to-day may be passive, may

to-morrow be burning with irritation against its opponents. The nature of man is to be carried away with the feelings and impulses of the moment. That is what we have to guard against in these cases; and it is our object to assure that the Rules we are now considering shall not be unfit for the purpose for which they are intended. What are we to understand is the purpose of this Rule? We have to take it from the declarations of Her Majesty's Government and their supporters; and it is, they say, to prevent excessive and protracted, and too prolonged debate; debate originating in the purpose of obstruction; they say that it is not intended to stop Amendments to clauses of Bills, or to Main Questions of any kind. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has repeatedly declared that he would desire that there should be full opportunity afforded to minorities to move Amendments; and I am sure that that would be the desire of the right hon. Gentleman, although he may change his mind, and we at all events are not obliged to believe that he will be always of the same mind as he is to-night. How do we approach this question of affording to minorities the right of moving Amendments? We approach it in view of the Report of the Committee of last Session. It was carefully provided in the Report of that Committee, which was presided over by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), that there should be no advance upon the power of the closure already possessed under the Rules of the House until the House had been sitting till 12 o'clock at night, and that then the closure should only apply to the Orders which were at the head of the list of Public Business; in other words, it was seen clearly that the power of summary closure, as provided by the Rule before us, was liable to abuse, and the whole right was given to minorities to move their Amendments and speak upon them before the Minister could ask that the closure should be applied. That is the *clôture* of the Select Committee of 1886, which gave the margin of a whole night to the minority to discuss the Main Question with Amendments. Well, Sir, with all that margin, it was considered to be too stringent and too dangerous by the Party now in Office, and they

presented a minority Report in accordance with those views. We may assume, that if the late Government had been able to bring forward that Closure Resolution, with its strictly guarded provisions and its safeguards against abuse, that the Representatives of the present Government, including the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, would have strongly protested, and have spent days, and weeks, and months of the time of the House, as they did in 1882, in protesting against the insufficiency of the safeguards which surrounded the Closure Rule, safeguards which we should gladly welcome as being far in excess of what I am asking for under the Amendment which I have placed upon the Paper. Does the right hon. Gentleman think that he is acting fairly towards the Opposition in the stern attitude of *non possumus* which he has taken up on this question? He must see by this time, that his Rule is more far-reaching and more drastic than he had any conception of when this discussion commenced; and that many Members of the House view with alarm the consequences which may result in the absence of all safeguards. Does he think it is in accordance with the traditions of the Conservative Party that a Rule like this—a two-edged weapon—should be passed without some addition that there shall be power to the minority to move Amendments? Does he think that posterity will hold him and his Party blameless in giving away the rights of minorities? After all, this is not a question of a day or a year. The right hon. Gentleman may suppose it is a desirable thing to pass a stringent regulation in order to pass through a severe time; but when he has got that he may find that he is no better off than he was, just as Governments have found that, having got Coercion Acts passed, they have been worse off than before. The right hon. Gentleman should remember that a Minister is only the creature of a day—a gaudy butterfly flying round the lamp of power, who may find his wings singed by the exercise; but, however that may be, the right hon. Gentleman, as Leader of the Conservative Party, has important traditions to preserve in this matter. He has to remember that his Party has been, for the last 50 years, in five cases out of six, the Party of minority, and that it will be, in all probability, the

Party of minority in the future. I invite him to give us a helping hand in the fight we are now making on behalf of minorities. It is not a matter which can affect us for many years. I suppose our time here, however matters may turn out, will be limited; but it is a matter which concerns the Party of the right hon. Gentleman very deeply. This House has many privileges and many rights to guard—rights of property, inherited rights—and I entreat him, while we are on the threshold of this great question, not to turn his back upon this Amendment, but to see that there are inserted in this Rule safeguards for the protection of the rights of minorities such as that which I now beg to move.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, by inserting after the word "proposed" the words "if no Amendment has been moved thereto."—*Mr. Parnell*.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell) has made to me a very earnest appeal to endeavour to protect the rights of minorities. I have listened, with very great attention, to the speech of the hon. Gentleman; but I will repeat what I have said in this House on many occasions—that I believe there will be ample security for the rights of minorities in the Rule now before us; and that the Rule is simply directed against that licence of speech which has existed in this House for several Sessions past. I understand that the proposal of the hon. Gentleman will require that the closure should be moved upon every Amendment, however frivolous, however frequently repeated in substance, so that Amendments in Supply on items of the most minute character would necessitate repeated Divisions before the ultimate decision of the Committee could be taken. I say to that what an hon. Member has already said—that no Member of the House would dare to propose the closure of debate arbitrarily without giving the House ample and sufficient opportunity for debate. On the other hand, no one standing in the position which I occupy ought to furnish to those who really seek to turn the Rules and Orders of the House into a means of Obstruction, with another weapon, or

means of impeding the progress of debate; which, if this Amendment were adopted, would certainly be the case. We have occupied much, I will not say too much, time with the discussion of this Rule, and I would point out to the hon. Member that having to discuss questions which have been decided on analogous proposals, has only the effect of closing those days which the hon. Member, I believe, wishes, and which I am myself anxious, should be available for private Members. I appeal to the hon. Gentleman to consider the principles involved in the Rule before the House. If he will do that, and allow the House rapidly to arrive at a decision on the main principles involved in this Rule, the House will then speedily regain control over its own time, and be able also fully to maintain the rights and liberties of the minorities.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Sir, I am at a loss to understand how anyone can imagine the speech we have just heard pertinent to the Amendment. It has sufficed, however, to let us see what is in the breast of the Government, and it is in this, that in applying the *clôture* to an Amendment, we shall also apply it to the Original Question. Strangle the mother, and you strangle the children also. It comes to this, that if you have an Amendment upon an Amendment, by putting the *clôture* upon that, the Original Question must be put straight away. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury took refuge in generalities, and said that the hon. Member for Cork wished to put the House back again into the position of master of its own debates, and he spoke of vicious licence which had prevailed of late years. Perhaps he would permit me to point out that the Member to whom his words would best apply is the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill); who, with others like him, has flourished under the shadow of liberty which the right hon. Gentleman is now attempting to cut down. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has been rightly interpreted as only a declaratory Amendment, and I myself should be surprised if it were anything else. The hon. Member has given attention to this question of Procedure for many years; in fact, he has had occasion to study it *ab initio*. It should be conceded, therefore, that he is

likely to have a better opinion of the stringency of the Rule than most Members. He brings forward an Amendment declaratory of what ought to be the law of the House—stating that you shall not *clôture* the Original Question when you *clôture* an Amendment. I think it a matter of great misfortune that the First Lord of the Treasury, when he sought to reply to my hon. Friend, did not give us his own views as to what would be possible under the Rule he proposes, either with the Amendment of my hon. Friend or without it. No one can contend for a moment that if this Rule is passed the Amendment of my hon. Friend will not be in accordance with its spirit. If you negative the Amendment you will thereby place in the hands of the Speaker an extraordinary weapon. Let us suppose the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech is under consideration. You may have an Amendment proposed by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) on the Question of Allotments, and if that is carried on for an inordinately long period and someone proposes that the *clôture* should be put on, subsequent Amendments will be out of Order. Will the House allow that for a moment? And yet that would be the state of things if the view of the First Lord of the Treasury is correct. That would be an enormous misfortune, and I beg the young Democratic Members of the Conservative Party, who may hope, with the example of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington before them, to rise to the position of ex-Chancellors of the Exchequer, to consider carefully the position they will be placing themselves in by supporting the view of the First Lord of the Treasury. [*Cries of "Order!"*] I would ask hon. Members opposite to preserve some kind of patience, and I would appeal to them to have regard to this Rule as it appears in its hideous nakedness. Are we to be told when we know that Governments are put out of Office by the passing of an Amendment to the Address, that by carrying a proposal for the *clôture* on an Amendment you kill all other Amendments, and prevent further discussion on the Original Question? It appears to me highly injudicious for the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury by

answers confined to generalities to attempt to get rid of an inconvenient debate.

MR. SCLATER - BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I am going to vote against this Amendment as I voted against the last, not because I undervalue the importance of limiting the imposition of the clôtüre, but because I think the limitation can be more conveniently discussed on an Amendment which will come before the House very soon. I think the House is hardly now sufficiently alive to the importance of some limitation. It is impossible to sever one of these proposals from the other. Recollect that the clôtüre which hitherto has been in abeyance, having only been exercised once or twice in the course of as many years, will in future be a matter of every night's occurrence. If you are to limit the period of our Sittings—if our Business is to conclude when the clock strikes 12 four nights in the week, you will have the clôtüre every night that the House sits. It is important, therefore, that the exact conditions of the clôtüre should be settled, and settled carefully. I hope the House will pass away from the Amendment we have before us, and come to grapple with the question at issue, which will be raised as soon as the controversy is settled between the Government and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). I proposed, originally, that the question of the limitation of the clôtüre should be put in a proviso at the end of the Rule. The Government desired that it should come in at an earlier period, and, therefore, they proposed to adopt the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire, which is practically mine. They do not adopt that Amendment in its entirety, but have adopted variations in its language, and these variations I trust they will put on the Paper before to-morrow morning. We shall then have an opportunity of seeing what they propose; but whatever the alterations in the hon. Baronet's Amendment, I beg of the House to consider the importance of having some limitation that every human being can understand, for this if for no other reason, that whereas the clôtüre has been only a possible element in our discussions hitherto, to

be availed of only in great emergencies, it will be, if this Rule is adopted, a matter that will come before the House, and be present to the House, on every occasion that it sits.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): From the Ministerial Bench has come a voice of warning. I do hope that the voice of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Selater-Booth) will not be, to that side of the House, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. We have heard generous sentiments from Gentlemen opposite, many of whom, no doubt, feel that the principles won by the blood and the genius of their forefathers should not be, like simple gamblers' counters, dissipated to the winds. The First Lord of the Treasury has spoken in terms of deprecation of what he calls the vicious licence of speech. Well, the same observation was made applicable to a great name in English literature—the great name of Milton, when he published his *Defence of the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. We are raising our protest against attacks upon the liberty of unlicensed speech. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that it is his belief that liberty of speech will not be affected by this Rule, as it stands, without the Amendment. We cannot see that through the right hon. Gentleman's eyes. We must look through the eyes of practical experience. From hon. Members sitting on this Bench—many of whom have suffered for their speeches—has come forth much evidence in defence of liberty of speech in this House; consequently I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, all through his argument, and the many speeches he has addressed to the House—few, perhaps, in comparison with the voices of warning and entreaty which have come to him from these Benches—says that the powers he seeks will not be pushed to an extreme limit. But the same argument may be applied in curtailment of every liberty we possess. We ask the right hon. Gentleman to meet us in a spirit of compromise as an endeavour to maintain one of the few remaining safeguards we possess.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 116; Noes 302: Majority 186.—(Div. List, No. 34.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to move the next Amendment standing in my name, as the principle has been decided by the last Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The next Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) is also precluded by what the House has already done. The House has sanctioned the adoption of the *clôture* while the Speaker is in the Chair, while the House is in Committee, and on going into Committee of Supply. To exclude

"the Motion for the Second Reading of any Bill introduced on the responsibility of the Government,"

seems to be based on no intelligible principle, and is in opposition to what the House has already sanctioned.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The next Amendment of mine is one for which the way was cleared —

MR. SPEAKER: As I understand, this is a limitation upon what the House has already decided. The *clôture* is to be applicable when the Speaker is in the Chair, and in Committee of Supply. Now, the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell) proposes to confine the application of the *clôture* to a special hour. That is in opposition to what the House has already decided.

MR. PARNELL: Perhaps I may be permitted to say that my proposal to limit the application of the *clôture* to

"midnight on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and half-past 5 of the clock on Wednesdays,"

is based upon the Report of the Select Committee of 1886.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Gentleman had moved an independent Amendment to the effect that there should be an automatic closure at midnight, that would be an entirely different thing; but it appears to me that the acceptance of this Amendment would be a direct stultification of what the House has already done. The House has decided that the closure should be applicable at the different stages I have mentioned, and it is impossible to suppose that all these stages could occur at midnight.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) rose in order to move to insert after "proposed" in line 1, "on a Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday."

MR. SPEAKER: For the reasons I have just given, it appears to me that the hon. and gallant Member's Amendment is out of Order.

COLONEL NOLAN: My Amendment is simply to exclude Tuesdays and Wednesdays from the operation of the closure, and I submit we have done nothing to prevent me moving such an Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Gentleman might just as well exclude Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

COLONEL NOLAN: I submit, Sir, that we have done nothing yet as to what days the Closure Rule is to be put into operation, and what days it shall not be applied.

MR. SPEAKER: The application of the *clôture* to a particular day in the week would be inconsistent with what we have already done. After what has been decided, we cannot confine the *clôture* to any particular hour or night. If Amendments of this sort are to be allowed, they may be carried to any length.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I can hardly think you mean, Mr. Speaker, that if we agree to a principle, we are not to move a limitation of that principle. All I understand my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) to propose is, that what are called private Members' days should be exempt from the application of the closure.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I will raise no question upon these Amendments, but for our future guidance I should like to know whether it is possible, by way of proviso, for instance, when we have laid down a general Rule, to resolve that the Rule may, under certain circumstances, be suspended or limited to particular times and to particular days—in fact, whether the passing of a general Rule would exclude altogether the passing of a proviso which would limit the adoption of that Rule in some way or other.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not prepared to say that a special proviso might not be introduced, relating to Tuesday and Wednesday sittings, inasmuch as private Members' Bills and Motions would be then before the House; but I am clearly of opinion that the ruling I have laid down is a sound one—namely, that the House having sanctioned a general

principle, it would be out of Order to attempt to reduce it to a minimum by a series of minute and trivial exceptions.

COLONEL NOLAN: Will you allow me, Sir, to alter my Amendment, so as to exempt Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The effect of such an Amendment will be exactly the same as that on the Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: The House has agreed that the *clôture* shall be generally applicable. I think the exception the hon. and gallant Gentleman wishes to make might be made by way of a proviso, considering the circumstances of private Members.

COLONEL NOLAN: Then I will move an Amendment in the shape of a proviso, enacting that the Rule shall not apply to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

MR. SPEAKER: I meant, of course, that the proviso should come at the end. A proviso cannot be inserted in the middle of a clause.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Would I be in Order, Mr. Speaker, in moving upon this Amendment the adjournment of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: I call upon the Hon. Gentleman the Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells), who had the following Amendment on the Paper:—

“Rule 1, line 1, leave out from ‘proposed,’ to end of line 4, and insert ‘A Member rising in his place may move ‘That the Question be now put,’ and if it shall appear to the Chair that, having due regard to the rights of the minority, it is proper that the sense of the House, or of the Committee, should be taken, as to whether or not the subject has been adequately discussed, he shall so inform the House or the Committee, and, in such case, shall forthwith put the said Question ‘That the Question be now put,’ which shall be decided without Amendment or Debate.”

said: Mr. Speaker, the Amendment which stands in my name raises a question of very considerable importance. I put it on the Paper with the view of facilitating the Business of the House, and of arriving at a solution of a question of considerable difficulty. In the course of this evening's debate, I understood you, Sir, to suggest that it would be an assistance to the proceedings if the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) were to reduce my Amendment to such words as he

thought desirable, and that then it should be open to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) to introduce the subject in which he is specially interested. In view of that suggestion, and having every desire to facilitate the Business of the House, I do not propose to move my Amendment, but to leave it in the hands of my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, so that he may move it in the form that to him may seem best.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): From what the hon. Baronet has just said, it may be convenient to the House that I should read the form in which I propose to move the Amendment. Having regard to the period of the evening (12.20), and to the fact that the Amendment is not on the Paper in the precise terms in which I propose to move it, I will only now read it, and then move the adjournment of the debate, in order that the Amendment may be taken as the first Business to-morrow morning. The Amendment will run thus—To leave out from the word “proposed,” in line 1, to the end of line 4, and insert the words—

“A Member rising in his place may claim to move, ‘That the Question be now put,’ and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, ‘That the Question be now put,’ shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate.”

I must express my acknowledgments to my hon. Friend (Sir Richard Paget) for having waived his right to move his Amendment. I believe the Amendment which I propose will substantially accomplish all I have undertaken to the House, and will afford the opportunity to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) which I understand he desires to have.

Amendment proposed,

In line 1, by leaving out from the word “proposed,” to the end of line 4, and inserting the words—“A Member rising in his place may claim to move, ‘That the Question be now put,’ and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, ‘That the Question be now put,’ shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate.”—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

Question proposed, "That the words 'a Motion may be made' stand part of the Question."

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I really must protest against the course which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) has thought proper to adopt. Notice was given of this Rule in due course, and it is to be assumed that the right hon. Gentleman knew his own mind. The debate commenced on this Rule, and various Amendments have been proposed. The question, which the right hon. Gentleman has now brought forward to meet this Amendment, was raised several days ago, and since then the right hon. Gentleman has, I suppose, been carrying about this Amendment concealed upon his person, and he has not deigned or vouchsafed until this evening to inform the House of its terms. I submit that it is in accordance with precedent—that it is in accordance with the custom and usage of the House; that it is in accordance with the habits of Members of the House—to give due Notice of any Motion or Amendment proposed to be moved. It is not reasonable that the right hon. Gentleman should come forward with an Amendment of this kind just as the House is about to adjourn, and announce that he will propose it at 12 o'clock to-morrow. How are we to know what attitude to take regarding this Amendment, when we have had no Notice of it? I do not wish to describe the course of proceedings and the negotiations which we may assume have taken place between the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) and his follower (Sir Richard Paget); but we saw that an Amendment was put down in the name of that hon. Gentleman, and that if it was put down for any purpose at all, it must have been to forestall the Amendment which was to be moved by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). When the Amendment has served its purpose, the hon. Gentleman (Sir Richard Paget) declines to move it, and thereupon the Leader of the House springs an Amendment upon the House in its place. I do not know what position we are drifting into in the consideration of these Rules owing to the shiftless and nerveless character of the Leadership of the right hon. Gentleman. It seems to me that

we are carrying on this debate with the probability before us that Amendments of an important character may be sprung upon us by the Leader of the House at a moment's notice. How are we to consider this Amendment between now and 12 o'clock to-morrow. There are just 11½ hours left to us for the purpose of sleep and the consideration of this important Resolution, which is to remedy all the defects in this extraordinary compilation in the shape of Rules of Procedure. I submit that the right hon. Gentleman ought to adjourn this Debate until next Friday, in order to allow Wednesday to be devoted to the work of private Members, and Thursday to be taken up with Supply; and in order that we may see what is the nature, tendency, and bearing of this Amendment. It may be that the Amendment will settle everything, and that everybody will be satisfied—that the lion will lie down with the lamb. At all events, the right hon. Gentleman should give his Amendment some chance. The only chance it has at present is that of being misunderstood. I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be adjourned till To-morrow."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

MR. PARNELL: I rise to move, as an Amendment, that the debate be resumed on Friday. I submit that it is impossible for the House to resume the discussion on the important Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman this day. Surely the right hon. Gentleman does not suppose that we can come to a decision on this Question at so short a notice. Does he intend that Members of this House shall have time to move an Amendment to this proposal, or does he come down, like Jupiter from the clouds, and tell us that this is his will, and that we must obey it? Is he the House, or does the House consist of its Members? Does the right hon. Gentleman wish to have everything taken on his own *ipse dixit*?

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "To-morrow," in order to insert the word "Friday."—(Mr. Parnell.)

Question proposed, "That the word, 'To-morrow' stand part of the Question."

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Sir, I must say that the strictures which the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has been pleased to pass on my right hon. Friend are utterly undeserved, and as incoherent as they are undeserved. At one moment, the hon. Member condemns the shifty and nerveless action of the right hon. Gentleman, and at another, he spoke of him as Jupiter coming down from the clouds. As a matter of fact, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has displayed, in the most remarkable manner, qualities of tact, patience, and firmness; and it is because those qualities are beginning to make their mark upon the House, that such burning indignation has been called forth from the hon. Member for Cork, who is generally so placid and calm of speech. Let me observe that the whole of the hon. Member's speech consisted of imputations, for which, I venture to say, there was no foundation whatever. He says, first of all, that this Amendment has been sprung upon the House. I say that the moment the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Wells Division of Somerset (Sir Richard Paget) was reached, it was the absolute and positive duty of the Leader of the House to deal with the Amendment and to state to the House the manner in which he proposed to do so; and, accordingly, in the most open and candid manner, he placed the views of the Government before the House. And not only that, but in order that the House might have an opportunity of considering it, he stated that he would move the adjournment at once and proceed with the debate to-morrow. The hon. Member proposes that the debate should be adjourned till Friday. I venture to say that we have had too many Adjournments already, and that if these Rules are to be carried, as undoubtedly they will be carried, we should proceed with them with the smallest possible delay. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not for one moment entertain the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I venture to promise the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down the next Cabinet Ministership. Everyone on the Treasury Bench must admit that he has deserved it by the encomium he has passed on the First Lord of the Treas-

ury; and, for my part, knowing his admirable qualifications, I should have no difficulty in conferring it upon him. The proposal of the hon. Member for Cork is that we should be afforded time for the consideration of the Amendment which the First Lord of the Treasury has just put forward. That, I think, will not be considered a strong request, having regard to the fact that to-morrow is a private Members' day. There are many points in the Amendment which are difficult to understand. One part of it is ungrammatical, and, although we do not necessarily expect grammar in Amendments, we do expect sense. I ask whether anybody can understand the wording of this Amendment? I say that, for that purpose, time is necessary; and, if we are allowed time to consider the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman, we may perhaps be able to knock the bottom out of it. We may have an opportunity of bringing argument to bear upon the Government. One of the great qualities displayed by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) is that he is not insensible to argument; and, therefore, in order that he may not be persuaded by argument, he has now left the House. I hope that we shall not be asked to come down to the House to-morrow, and enter upon the discussion of this Amendment, which would be more than human nature could bear.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Sir, although I cannot support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) at this period of the Session, when time presses, yet I cannot but agree that the Government have placed the House in very considerable difficulty, for no one can deny that, by the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman, the House is called upon to discuss an entirely new Rule. It is different in principle from the Rule deliberately introduced by the Government some weeks ago. I think it is a very great pity that, when this question as to the part which the Speaker is to take in the application of the closure was raised more than a week ago, the Government could not make up their mind as to what they would do on the subject. The question has been very much discussed both inside and outside the House, and surely the Government, with that before them, ought to have come to a decision

as to what alteration they would agree to in the proposed Rule. It will not, I think, shorten or facilitate the Business of the House that the Government, having deliberately placed one plan on the Paper, should now come down and propose a different plan; and I cannot but consider that, in doing this, the Government have taken a very inconvenient course.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Sir, my right hon. Friend (Sir William Harcourt) has, as usual, been extremely amusing; but I doubt whether he has been, at the same time, extremely fair. He blames the Government for having, as he says, introduced a new Rule—for having considered as we were challenged to do, the various Amendments that have been proposed in different parts of the House. At the commencement of these proceedings we stated that we were not so enamoured of the precise form in which these Rules were drawn, as not to take into consideration suggestions made in any quarter of the House; and I should like to know what the right hon. Gentleman opposite would have said if we had stood to the words originally proposed and had refused to listen to those suggestions. The right hon. Gentleman says that he does not think that any alteration of the proposals of the Government will facilitate the progress of Business. I am certain, however, that the rejection of every proposed alteration would not facilitate the progress of Business. There has been the Amendment of the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart); that of the hon. Baronet behind me (Sir Richard Paget), and the Amendments of other hon. Gentlemen, which we have considered, and that with the desire to obtain the greatest amount of acquiescence from the House. We have acted in this matter with the concurrence of Members on this side, and also with the concurrence of many hon. Gentlemen on the other side; and notwithstanding the taunts of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Government will continue to listen to any reasonable Amendments which may come from different parts of the House, believing that by so doing they will promote the transaction of Business.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Sir, The right hon. Gentle-

man the Chancellor of the Exchequer is never very amusing, very rarely fair, and seldom accurate. The right hon. Gentleman has undoubtedly misapprehended the opinions that have been expressed with regard to the Amendment which has been brought forward by the Government. No one has complained—neither the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), nor any of my hon. Friends, that the Government have listened to Amendments which have come from different parts of the House. The burden of complaint is entirely different. It is that the Government have not given the House timely Notice of the Amendment which they intended to propose. Let me state to the House what has taken place. The First Lord of the Treasury after a hurried conversation with a right hon. Gentleman, sprung this Amendment upon the House. I am in the recollection of the House, and I appeal to my hon. Friend to say whether or not the right hon. Gentleman was in absolute ignorance of the words of the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have now the courage and the unfairness to ask the House to consider at once the terms of an Amendment of which they themselves were ignorant a few hours ago. [*Interruption.*] I shall be sorry to have to move the adjournment of the debate; but if these discourteous interruptions continue, I shall take that course. I point out that the Amendment of the Member for the Basingstoke Division of Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth) was on the Paper as far back as last Thursday, and last Friday the First Lord of the Treasury announced that he would be willing to accept the spirit of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Shoreditch; but we have not yet had on the Paper the exact words in which the Government said they would carry out the spirit of that Amendment, and I think it is treating the House with disrespect that we should be allowed to spend several days without knowing what were the intentions of the Government.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. T. P. O'Connor.*)

And Mr. SPEAKER, being of opinion that the Motion was an abuse of the Rules of the House, put the Question forthwith.

[*Sixth Night.*]

The House divided:—Ayes 110; Noes 243: Majority 133.—(Div. List, No. 35.)

Original Question proposed, "That the word 'To-morrow' stand part of the Question."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I am glad to see the First Lord of the Treasury back in the House. I share entirely with him the desire that Business should be done as rapidly as possible, and the right hon. Gentleman is himself so conciliatory that I do think I shall be able to show him that the most desirable thing that can be done in the interest of debate is to agree to the Motion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell). On Thursday last, or about a week ago, I think the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Basingstoke Division of Hants was placed on the Table. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House then said that he would accept the spirit of the Amendment. Well, I hardly think that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman has sprung on us does accept so absolutely the spirit of that Amendment. We may suppose that since the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman was put down, the Cabinet have consulted together and considered in what way they could receive it. They have had several days to consider it; and we, surely, should have a little more than twelve hours. It cannot be considered extraordinary if we fail to realize and appreciate the Amendment, seeing that we have only just had it placed before us, and that the Cabinet took several days to make it up. It is most desirable that there should be a conciliatory spirit shown, in order that there should be nothing to interfere with healthy debate in dealing with Rules of Procedure. Is it possible that anything will be gained by the right hon. Gentleman insisting upon coming down here at 12 o'clock to-morrow in order to discuss this Amendment? Why, Sir, I am not a prophet; but if I were one, I would say that at 6 o'clock to-morrow no advance will have been made; and why? The reason is this—that anxious as we are to discuss the matter, everyone knows that when Members do not understand a thing they find it difficult to make progress upon it. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that it really would conduce to

do that which he and I are so anxious for—namely, get us rapidly through these Rules of Procedure, and enable the right hon. Gentleman, as he says on his side, to engage in the Business of the Session, and enable us, on our side, to know what the Business of the Session will be, if he would give way on this point. We are both anxious to make progress, and it really will conduce to our getting to the end of the Procedure Rules if the right hon. Gentleman will concede this point, which I think is a fair and legitimate one—that we should have a day to consider that which the Cabinet itself has taken a week to think over.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I wish always to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards an hon. Member who is so conciliatory himself towards me. The hon. Gentleman has said that no progress will be made to-morrow, and he says he is not a prophet. Why, Sir, I think he has a wonderful gift of prophecy. I can only say I shall deeply regret it if no progress is made to-morrow; but, whether or no, I certainly think it my duty to the House and to the country to persevere in the Motion I have made.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I only just wish to give the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a practical instance of the extreme trouble he is giving Members of this House, and, perhaps, it may force him to reconsider his decision. I have given Notice of an Amendment to the effect that an hour's debate shall be allowed, leaving out from the words "that the Question be now put." I have not seen the Amendment of the Government, and I have had to hand mine in prepared in a very slipshod fashion. If we had had the Amendment before us, we should have been able to see the whole of it, and to have put down Notices to it. I now beg to point out the extreme inconvenience caused by the course taken by the Government. We shall all be groping in the dark, and, moreover, we shall be greatly prejudiced by not being able to put down our Amendments to-night.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I must protest against the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that it is to the interest of the country to resist the Motion made. For my own part, I do not believe it to be to the interests of the country that

the Representatives of the country should be hurried or flurried in these matters. It is impossible for Members to discuss new Amendments without ample time for consideration. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has pointed out, the Amendment of the Government contains new principles most fatal to minorities. I think that the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork is most reasonable, and that the House and the country should have between this and next Friday to consider the Government Amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): No doubt a considerable length of time has been devoted to the consideration of this Rule; in the opinion of hon. Gentlemen opposite, perhaps an undue length of time. But, on the other hand, there may be undue haste in attempting to force through the House a serious alteration in the Rule the Government have proposed. When we meet to-morrow, we shall have had very little time to consider the Amendment which has been deliberately adopted by the Cabinet. Why was not the House taken into the confidence of the Government? Why was not ample time given in order that the House might be able to consider this Amendment as it has had the chance of considering other Amendments? If this Amendment has been hastily adopted, then, for the sake of the Government itself, as well as of the House at large, I think it would be of advantage that we should postpone the debate until Friday. Why is it that the hon. Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire has withdrawn his Amendment? He has done it in concert with the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. If that is so, clearly the right hon. Gentleman had to provide a substitute, and it is evident that he had not consulted his Colleagues as to the phraseology of the alteration of the Rule, for he brought the Paper into the House, and was not himself able to communicate its terms to us. This important modification which has been stated to the House to-night, I think I am right in saying, was hastily put together by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in consultation with the First Lord of the Treasury. To ask the House to proceed in such a hasty and

irregular manner is to exact too much from it. It is not an ordinary third class Bill that we are considering, but the most important Rule which can be submitted to Parliament, and one which will influence the proceedings of Parliament for some time to come. If hon. Gentlemen opposite had been sitting on this side of the House, and this trick had been attempted to be played upon them, they would have been loud in their denunciations. We want time to consider the words of the proposal of the Government and the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Selater-Booth). I, for one, venture to think that no anticipation could be more correct than the prophecy of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). Coming hastily as this proposal does, it must appear suspicious; and I think the Government would be adopting the best means of facilitating Business if they postponed the discussion till Friday and took Supply to-morrow.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not think—[*Loud and continued cries of "Divide!"*] I do not think the House has any right to complain of my rising. This is the first occasion on which—[*Cries of "Divide!"*] This is the first occasion on which I have interposed in this debate, and it seems to me that if no Members are to speak a single word upon this matter—[*Cries of "Divide!"*] I have not spoken in this debate before. I am addressing myself to Mr. Speaker and not to you. I think I may fairly ask for two or three minutes of the attention of the hon. Members opposite, who claim to have all the intelligence if not all the courtesy of the House on their side. I only wish to place before the House, in a few words, my reasons for supporting the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) in respect to this matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) made a pointed reference just now to the Amendment on the Paper in the name of the right hon. Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage), and gave that as a reason for the action of the Government in this matter. It appears to me perfectly clear that the Government, finding that some of their Unionist Supporters were likely to go against them, have thrown their political somersault and sprung this Amendment on the House. It is impossible to con-

[*Sixth Night.*]

sider, at a moment's notice, this revolutionary change in the attitude of the Government. We are entitled to ask for a little more than eight or 10 hours in which to consider the present proposition of the Government. It is not as if this were a mere verbal alteration; but it is an entirely new proposal, a proposal absolutely different in every particular to that the Government had pinned their faith upon during the last week. I have no doubt we shall be charged with Obstruction; but we are not the real Obstructionists.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not confining himself to the Motion before the House.

MR. CONYBEARE: I submit, of course, to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I did not mean to charge hon. Members opposite with any offence. I will only—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman must confine himself to the Motion before the House; that is what I was referring to.

MR. CONYBEARE: I understand your ruling, Sir. I will only say, in conclusion, that we on this side of the House are entitled to as much consideration in respect to this proceeding on the part of the Government as any Members on the other side. The claim we make for only a few hours' delay is really one that we are entitled to press upon Her Majesty's Government. If it were 7 o'clock in the evening instead of half-past 1 in the morning, the case would be different. It is perfectly obvious we have had no opportunity of considering the bearings of this Amendment, and therefore I heartily support the proposition of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell).

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 223; Noes 97: Majority 126.—(Div. List, No. 36.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on National Provident Insurance do consist of Seventeen Members:—The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. William Lowther, Viscount Folkestone, Viscount Grimston, Mr. Norton, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. A. H. Acland, Mr.

Mr. Conybeare

Abraham, Mr. Bernard Coleridge, Mr. Walter James, Mr. Biddulph, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. T. M. Healy, and Mr. Byrne.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 2nd March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—considered in Committee Resolutions [February 28] reported.

PUBLIC BILLS.—Ordered—First Reading—Bills of Exchange (Summary Judgment)* [185]; Jurors' Detention* [186].
Second Reading—Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2) [100], debate adjourned.

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Rating of Machinery* [148].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

WEYMOUTH AND MELCOMBE REGIS CORPORATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(Mr. Dillwyn.)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): This Bill is an extremely important one, and requires, I think, the careful consideration of the House. It consists of more than 100 pages.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Bill is opposed, the second reading must stand over.

Bill to be read a second time To-morrow.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SEVENTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Main Question, as amended,

"That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That

the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate :

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate :

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

And which Amendment was,

In line 1, by leaving out from the word "proposed," to the end of line 4, in order to insert the words—"A Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words 'a Motion may be made' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

MR. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): The first Amendment on the Paper stands in my name—namely, to amend the Amendment by inserting after the word "Member" the words "of the Government, or the mover or seconder of the Motion then in Debate, or the mover or seconder of an Amendment thereto." When the Amendment was first placed on the Paper this Rule was in a different position from that which it now occupies. At that time you, Sir, were to be entirely responsible, by your decision for every assent given from the Chair to the closure of debate. It was my wish, acting in accord with a considerable number of hon. Members, that the Chair should be shielded from an undue call for the exercise of its judgment. If the House were to assent to the Amendment of the Leader of the House as it now stands, our debates would be liable to interruption from every one of the 670 Members who sit in

this House. I am afraid if this power were entrusted to every hon. Member of the House, judging from my short experience in this Chamber, that it might at times be exercised in a somewhat eccentric manner.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I rise to Order. I wish to know whether the House has already resolved to leave out the word "proposed" to the end of line 4. Would the hon. Member's Amendment be regular before the House has had an opportunity of discussing whether the words proposed to be left out by the Amendment of the Leader of the House should be left out, because the leaving out of those words makes a radical change in the Rule as it stands.

MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment is accurately stated in the question—namely, to leave out all the words after the word "proposed" to the word "debate," in order to admit the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury. The question is imperfectly stated on the Notice Paper, and really is that the words "a motion may be made" shall stand part of the proposed Rule.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I wish before the question goes further, to protest against the leaving out of these words, because their omission will make a radical change to the Rule, and a change which has been sprung upon the House very suddenly. I am altogether opposed to the change, and I wish to have the safeguard which is contained both in the old Rule and in the new Rule just proposed. A judicial opinion from the Chair that the question is ripe for decision is wholly and absolutely done away with by the proposed Amendment, which provides that any Member may move that the Question be now put; and you, Sir, will have to take upon yourself to decide, not that the question is ripe to be put, but whether the application of the closure would be an abuse of the forms of the House. That, I maintain, is a radical alteration of the position. No doubt there would be power to put down Members who would make Motions of that kind for the purpose of mere obstruction; but unless the Speaker took upon himself a very responsible power indeed, I think it would be very rare that he would feel himself in a position to declare that a Motion made by the Leader of the House, commanding a majority in the House, was an

abuse of the Rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority. Therefore, I do not think we should proceed to discuss the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House until we have first resolved whether we are prepared to make this radical alteration. It is not desirable that the majority should be entrusted with the immense power of over-riding minorities which might possibly be applied habitually in rough-riding over small minorities. If the House is asked to accept a provision of this kind, it will probably be accompanied by a further provision that it should not be enforced except with the consent of a majority of two-thirds. In no case will one great Party ever be allowed to crush the other great Party by the exercise of a bare majority. It is small minorities that will be crushed. I am satisfied that the Speaker would continue to act with impartiality; but by this change we will cease to entrust to him the protection of small minorities, and even of considerable minorities. It has been pointed out more than once, and the sentiment has been cheered, that to the persistence of small minorities we owe all our great reforms. It is because I am satisfied that small minorities will be crushed if the Amendment is accepted as it stands, that I offer a most strenuous protest against it.

MR. SCLATER - BOOTH, (Hants, Basinstoke): On Friday last the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) informed the House that he was prepared to accept the Amendment I had placed on the Paper, or rather he said that if the language were slightly modified he would accept it in spirit. Now, I am bound to say that the Amendment now put on the Paper is anything but that which I proposed to submit. It entirely reverses the presumption as it stood before. The presumption now has been that the Speaker will intervene, and exercise his judgment whether or not it is reasonable that the closure shall be applied. But the responsibility of the Speaker, which I desire to strengthen and establish, has now been entirely taken away, and a great advance has been made towards the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), of which I disapprove. I desire to strengthen

the hands of the Speaker rather than to weaken them. The Speaker is now only to have a veto if he finds an unusual thing is being done—that is, if he finds that the Rules of the House are being disobeyed. The person who makes the Motion will, in nine cases out of ten, be a Member of the Government in charge of the Bill, or Order of the Day, or Motion that is before the House. As was pointed out yesterday, by the operation of fixed time for closing debate on every day in the week, the closure will become a matter of every-day occurrence. It is not to be supposed that the Government will be guilty of anything which can be recognized by the Speaker as an abuse of the Forms of the House, or that they will unduly exercise their power in the direction of applying the closure day after day; but I apprehend that under this Rule the Speaker will not only be deprived of the wholesome and desirable discretion I, for one, wish to entrust him with, but, as a matter of fact, he will be obliged to apply the closure whenever anybody rises in his place to demand it. That is a very great change, and I must say that the Amendment now proposed is quite different from that which I ventured to place on the Paper.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I quite agree with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) that the Amendment proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House makes a radical change in the Rule. The Amendment uses these words—

“Unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority.”

Now, it seems to me that it would be impossible to ascertain whether the rights of the minority are properly recognized without inserting some words such as were proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), to the effect that an opportunity should be given for discussion. How could it be possible to ascertain the rights of the minority until the minority have had an opportunity of stating their objections to any proposals that may be made? It seems to me that the First Lord of the Treasury would be able to make this part of the Rule acceptable to all hon. Members of the House if he would introduce words which we were in the belief he

was willing to introduce to provide that some fair and reasonable opportunity should be given for discussion. The Government have stated over and over again that they are willing and desirous that minorities should have an opportunity of stating their views to the House. We have, in the old Rule, certain regulations which must be observed in closing a debate. Those regulations have been removed, and by this proposal it is intended to make a new departure, and to enable the closure to be applied without debate. I think that the liberties of this House depend upon a reasonable opportunity being afforded for debate; and I cannot see why the Government should decline to accept the very fair words proposed by the hon. Member for Cork. I have myself no faith whatever in the closure as a means of expediting the Business of this House. I think the good sense of the House, and the duty of Members to those who send them here, ought to induce them to co-operate together for the better conduct of the Public Business. If that is not done I have no hope that any artificial means we can employ will help us very much. I take it that it is the sense of the House to have a closure of some kind, and I would appeal to the Government to make it so clear that there should be no room for doubt that any minority, however small, who come here with a mandate from their constituents, cannot be put to silence by the majority until a fair opportunity for discussion has been given.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I think there is some misconception as to the bearing of the Amendment moved by my right hon. Friend. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down speaks of this Amendment as if it were the only possible protection of the rights of minorities. I think the hon. Gentleman cannot have studied the proviso at the end of the Rule, which is a real protection for the rights of minorities. That proviso, which is borrowed from the existing Rule, is in these words:—

“Provided always that questions for the closure of debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear, by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than 200 Members, or was opposed by less than 40 Members and supported by more than 100 Members.”

Therefore, any Members who number less than 40 will be able to insist upon continuing the debate unless the majority should consist of at least 100 Members. Now I think that if a small minority requires protection, it could hardly be more efficiently protected than by that proviso. Then, again, it is provided that if the minority exceeds 40, the Motion for Closure must be supported by 200. I have no doubt this proviso received very careful consideration from the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) before he proposed it; and, in my opinion, it gives an effective and adequate protection to the rights of small minorities. Does the hon. Member require, if the proposal is supported by 20 Members, that it should be necessary for 650 to outvote them. I think the House will be inclined to feel that small minorities are sufficiently protected by the existing Standing Order, and by the proviso which it is proposed to re-enact in this clause.

MR. ESSLEMONT: May I explain? I do not see how 40 Members are to protect two. They might have no desire to do so.

MR. RAIKES: The hon. Gentleman is labouring under a misconception. What I say is that if the hon. Member and the hon. Gentleman who sits next to him were to object to the closure of debate, they would be able to insist on the debate being continued even if there were 99 Members opposed to them. Any minority, however inconsiderable, would be able to insist on the debate being continued unless there were 100 or more Members in the House who wished to close it. I do not think that a more complete protection of the rights of minorities could be afforded than is provided by this Rule; and when the minority exceeds 40, if it be only 41, it would require 200 or more Members to enforce the closure. That will form part, if this Rule is carried, of the written law of the House. It will not be a question left to the arbitrament of the Chair, but will be embodied in our Standing Orders, and will afford complete protection to small minorities. But another matter of importance is the protection of large majorities. Under the Standing Order unless some alteration is made it will be possible for a bare majority to prevail. Thus 202 Members might close a debate, although 201

wish to continue it. That is one point it is proposed to meet by the Amendment we are now discussing. We propose in those cases where the minority and the majority are both considerable—that is to say where the majority exceeds 200, and the minority also exceeds 200—to leave to the Chair the responsibility of deciding whether the question is or is not to be put; and we propose to afford that protection to large minorities which has been already provided for small minorities by the existing Standing Order. That being so, we come to the terms of the Amendment proposed by my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend proposes to leave two points only to the discretion of the Chair. Some objection has been taken—notably, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), to what he regards as an extension of the responsibility of the Chair. I think the gist of his argument was to show that the position of the Chair would be more embarrassed and extended than it is now, by the substitution of the new Rule for the Rule now in existence. An endeavour has been made by my right hon. Friend to meet that objection. He has endeavoured to define, as far as the matter can be defined, the responsibility of the Chair in dealing with questions of this kind. It is sought by the Amendment to point out what are the two grounds upon which the Chair may decline to allow a Motion for closure to be put; and those two grounds are, firstly, an abuse of the Rules of the House, and secondly an infringement of the rights of minorities. On those two points only the Chair is to judge, and I venture to think that in defining those responsibilities we are only acting in accordance with the unwritten law of the House and ancient usages. The Speaker is the only judge of Questions of Order, and the Speaker, therefore, is the right and proper person to decide whether or not a question of this sort is an abuse of the Forms of the House. Not only is the Speaker the recognized arbiter of questions of Order, but he is also the recognized protector of the rights of minorities, and this Resolution merely defines his position with regard to that, and, I think, strengthens it by recognizing what is to be the written law of the House, and pointing out that he may also exercise his veto in the matter of

closure in his capacity of protection of the rights of minorities. I hope I have made the situation perfectly clear. If the Amendment is carried and embodied in the Rule, hon. Members will have not merely the protection afforded by the proviso, not merely that which is an adequate protection for small minorities; they will have extended to the larger minorities the protection of the Chair—minorities which, when the House is not full, might be voted down by a bare majority.

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburghshire): The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) has put before the House in a perfectly clear manner what is intended to be the effect of the Amendment; and, for my part, it appears to me that the Rule with this Amendment would carry out the object satisfactorily. I regard the Rule much more from the point of view of restoring the efficiency of the majority of the House rather than the preventing the danger of infringing the rights of minorities. From what I have seen during the seven years I have sat in Parliament there appears to be a growing difficulty for the Government representing the majority of the people of the country, to give effect to the will of the people who send them here. I agree in that matter with the remarks I have heard on several occasions from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I am not in the least afraid of what is called closure by a bare majority. If hon. Members are afraid of that sort of closure surely they cannot object to an Amendment which places restrictions on the Rule. My hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) has an Amendment to omit from the Rule the words which require the consent of the Chair to a Motion that the Question be now put; but I would ask my hon. Friend whether, under the circumstances, it is worth while to have a prolonged fight over his Amendment, seeing how far the Government have gone towards meeting his views. What I desire to see is a closure that can be easily applied. In the United States there is a closure by a bare majority, and I understand that it answers very well. It is never unfairly applied, and the fact that it can be applied easily when necessary renders its application

very unfrequent. As a matter of fact, there is a fear of it. I do not agree with the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont), who seems to think that the Rule would be of little use in restoring the efficiency of the House. My opinion is that the Rules already in existence have done good; but they would have done more good if they had gone further. For instance, much obstructive delay in the Business of the House has been got rid of by the adoption of the Rule which relates to the moving of Motions for Adjournment at Question time. Therefore, I ask the House not to listen to those who say that no good can be obtained from these Rules.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I believe that the discussion which is now taking place is entirely irregular, and that if it had not been for the intervention of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) we should have been placed in an absolutely false position. The Question proposed last night was a Motion to leave out the words, "A Motion may be made;" but the Question sought to be put the first thing this morning was, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question." We have not yet arrived at the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, and it ought not to be before the House at all.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I put the Question to the House in a perfectly regular way. I have put the Question that the words, "A Motion may be made" stand part of the Question, and the object in putting the Question in that way is to get rid of all the words down to "Amendment or debate" for the purpose of substituting the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury. Technically, therefore, the words proposed to be left out, to which objection is taken, are before the House as well as the Amendment it is proposed to insert in their place. I only put the Question, that the words "A Motion may be made" be omitted in order to enable the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) to come in. Therefore, instead of being irregular, the way in which the Question was put is perfectly regular.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I did not say that the proceedings were irregular; but what I said was that the discussion

was irregular *quoad* the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury. My contention is, that before we come to the discussion of that Amendment we must first have disposed of every Amendment on the Paper, and we may prefer the Rule as amended by those Amendments to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. I respectfully submit that the Amendment of the Government should take its regular turn; and in that case it may probably not be reached until the day after to-morrow, or even the following week. I would respectfully ask, Sir, for your ruling on this point.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is under a misconception. The Question now before the House is whether the words of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury are to become a substantive matter of discussion; and the Question I have put is whether the words, "A Motion is made," shall stand part of the Question. If those words are omitted the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman becomes the substantive Question, and it may be amended in any shape before it is inserted in the Rule.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): The Amendment certainly contains some very ambiguous phrases, owing, I presume, to the haste with which it has been prepared. For instance, "the rights of the minority" is an entirely new Parliamentary phrase, which will have to be defined, because I think we cannot be too guarded in the use of new phrases. We are, as a matter of fact, imposing a task upon the Speaker which he cannot perform. How is the Speaker to ascertain whether the rights of the minority are being infringed? First of all, what are the rights of the minority? I suppose that, being a new Parliamentary phrase, it would have to be reconsidered; but I understand that one of the chief rights of the minority is to be able to get up in this House and speak upon any question. If that is so, how is the Speaker to ascertain whether the rights of the minority are being infringed, unless hon. Members have already exercised that right? How can the Speaker possibly ascertain on Irish or Scotch questions whether any Irish or Scotch Member desires to be heard?

MR. SALT (Stafford): The proper time to discuss the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment in detail will be when he moves it, but following what

has been said on the other side, I must say that I regard with considerable anxiety the introduction of these new phrases, "the abuse of the Rules of the House," and "an infringement of the rights of the minority." I am afraid that the introduction of these new terms—especially that of "rights of the minority"—will create new difficulties in regard to a matter which is already sufficiently complicated and difficult. Personally I should prefer that the matter should be left entirely to the discretion of the Chair, and, if any kind of restriction is necessary, to the old Parliamentary phrase that the Chairman should be guided by the evident sense of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I presume that the Government brought forward the proposed Rules after careful consideration. Yet they now spring upon us a very important change, and we have no security that it has received the deliberate judgment of the Cabinet. If that be so, I do not see why the Amendment of the Government should carry more weight with it than the Amendments which have been put down by independent Members of the House. I hold that it is of the greatest possible importance that the Speaker should be consulted, and should give his assent, before the closure is applied. It is now proposed to reverse the whole order of things, and it is left in the power of any hon. Member of the House to proceed to put the closure in force unless you shall intervene. I wish to know in what way it can be said that a Member who moves the closure of the debate is abusing the Rules of this House, and I can see no security whatever in the use of the phrase, "the rights of the minority." Right hon. Members opposite have completely changed their front upon this question, and they have altogether departed from the pledge given by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, that the Rules of Procedure should not be treated as a Party question. I strongly object to the disappearance of the substance of five lines of the proposed Rule in order that a new proposal may be taken of which we know nothing.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I am as anxious as

any hon. Member to cure the creeping paralysis which is said to have come over the Business of this House. I say nothing as to whether the Speaker should be called upon to decide a Motion would be an abuse of the Forms of the House, but I think it would be an extremely difficult and delicate duty to call upon the Speaker or Chairman of Committee to decide whether there had been an infringement of the rights of the minority or not. I want to know the meaning of the words "rights of the minority." It is entirely new in a Parliamentary sense; indeed, I should like to know what is a minority. It may be anything from two to 300, and it is obvious that the rights of a minority would not depend upon its numerical strength, but on its relation to the majority. Surely the true solution of the problem would be a simple closure, to be moved either by a Minister or by a Member of the majority, upon whom the odium should rest if they attempted to use their power oppressively.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): I have always been of opinion that our Rules of Procedure require strengthening, but I am disposed to think that with every desire to strengthen the authority of the Chair, the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman is far from carrying out that object, and that it will, unintentionally no doubt, to a certain extent tend to weaken it. There is an impression out of doors that the object of these Rules is to enable the Government to carry measures in the teeth of hon. Members who sit below the Gangway on this side of the House. They are now in a minority, but no one can tell whether they are not, in conjunction with the constituencies, actually at this moment in a majority. In the event of this Rule being carried, I am afraid that the Speaker will be placed in a position which I may almost describe as intolerable. If the Speaker attempts to apply the Rule in the case of a Coercion Bill which may be acceptable to the Party in power, he may find that his authority is greatly weakened in being at variance with the general view of the constituencies. On the other hand, if the Speaker acts in direct antagonism to the Government of the day, his position may be made both odious and uncomfortable, and I

think it would be very doubtful how long he would continue to hold it.

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): This discussion is surely premature and irregular. I understand the question to be simply this. Shall the Chair initiate the closure and be followed by a Member moving it, or shall a Member first move it, and the Chair give or withhold assent to his doing so? The considerations which are to guide the Chair in the exercise of this discretion are not at present before us, and I hope we shall not now waste time in discussing them, as they certainly must be fully considered when we come to the next part of the clause. I shall support the Amendment, as it seems to me best for the Motion to be first made, and then for the Chair to have a veto on its being put.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 85; Noes 190: Majority 105.—(Div. List, No. 37.)

Question proposed,

"That the words 'A Member rising in his place may claim to move,' 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate' be there inserted."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

MR. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): I rise to move as an Amendment to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) to insert after the word "Member" the words—

"Of the Government, or the Mover or Seconder of the Motion then in debate, or the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment thereto."

When I was interrupted by an appeal to the Speaker a short time ago I was endeavouring to explain that when my Amendment was put upon the Paper it was intimately, though not indispensably, connected with the relief of the Speaker from all interference with the closure of debate. At that time, under the proposed Rule of the Government, the Speaker's active interposition would be at the call of every hon. Member of the House, and his decision would probably be required many times during our proceedings. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hampshire (Mr. Selater-Booth) has expressed the apprehension that it would be required every day. It is true that by the Amendment

of the First Lord of the Treasury the interference of the Speaker is reduced to a veto, and that on the initiative, so to speak, of the Member proposing the closure. I do not think that the introduction of this initiative relieves the Speaker in any essential particular; in fact, it rather calls upon him to act when, if he were left to his own initiative, he might choose to remain silent. I admit that this Amendment is a judicious curtailment of embarrassing and unnecessary functions; but in its curtailed form the Speaker's interposition is unnecessary. I will not, however, dwell on this. The discussion of this point will be better taken on the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford. We shall do well to exclude the Speaker altogether from our Party conflicts. But if the Speaker be relieved of all responsibility in respect to the application of the closure, we are, by the proposed Rule of the Government, brought face to face with the action of every individual Member of the House. There are many natural defects in Members' characters which come to the front in the heat of debate; there is irritability, eccentricity, and even something of the playfulness of youth left in many mature Members of the House, and it may happen that a Member sitting in some dark corner may move the closure for the purpose, ostensibly, of promoting Business, but really for the purpose of retarding Business. I would remove the temptation of hon. Members to take such irregular action as this. There is another consideration which has influenced my judgment, and I trust it will have some weight with the House generally. In taking such an important step as moving the closure, the instigating interest, the animating spirit, ought to be plainly revealed. In my opinion, the independent Member rising to propose the closure of debate would, as a rule, be a Member with very little responsibility—possibly the mere catspaw of the Government, or of the Opposition, or of a Party or of a small section of the House. I have endeavoured in my Amendment to meet this objection by what appears to me to be a very orderly provision. I would dismiss the 670 units of this House—or "items," as an hon. Friend of mine prefers to call them—from a self-imposed duty which might be grossly or foolishly abused. This

House should, in the interest of debate and for the promotion of Business, act through responsible agents for the time being. Who ought to be these agents? In the first place, it cannot be denied that the Members of the Government for the time being would be most proper agents; in the second place, the Mover or Seconder of the Motion before the House; and, in the third place, the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment to the Motion before the House would be very fitting agents. Under these heads all the conflicting interests in the debate or its closure would be represented. Take the Members of the Government. They include, naturally, the Leader of the House. The interests of the Government would, in the first place, by this agency, be promoted and attended to. But the Leader of the House has a double function. He has not only to secure and promote the interests of the Government, but he has to watch over the humours and temper of the House, and to promote by his management the progress of Business. Action from that source could not fail to be most responsible. I cannot imagine that the Members of the Government would do a foolish thing, though they might occasionally act in a somewhat arbitrary manner. In the main, Members of the Government would shrink from any unfair use of the power which, by my proposition, would be entrusted to them. The Government would not, and ought not to be able to, hide itself behind an individual Member. Then I turn to the Mover or Seconder of the Motion before the House. Under this head hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Front Opposition Bench would generally find a fitting and orderly place. If it became necessary in their judgment that a debate should close they would always be enabled to put themselves in a position to promote that closure. It may be urged that the Leaders of an organized Opposition would have no particular interest in closing a debate or even in promoting Business. Hon. Members generally will concede that that is but a superficial view to take of the position of the ordinary Leaders of an organized Opposition and unjust to them. The Opposition Leader may wish as much as the Government to obtain the expression of the views of

the House upon a matter before it, not necessarily to secure a victory, but to resist the shelving of an important proposition, and to promote its ultimate acceptance. If we permit the Mover or the Seconder of the Motion to move the closure of a debate upon the Motion we shall secure an expression of the opinion of the House which often in times past has by one means or another been prevented. By such a provision the independent Member, recently so much suppressed, may once again assert a power to exist and act in legislative matters. We must not forget that the Mover or the Seconder of a Motion before the House will not only represent himself, but a large section and interest in the House. Both the Mover and Seconder will, in all probability, be eminently representative men. I may, perhaps, remark that the introduction of the Seconder into my Amendment is to provide against a contingency which may arise; if the Mover is unavoidably absent we shall have the Seconder to take his place. But if we left the initiative under these two heads we should not do justice to an important section of the House—namely, to the section antagonistic to the question under debate; and therefore it is I propose that the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment to the Motion before the House shall have equal right to the Mover or Seconder of the Motion to propose the closure. The Mover and Seconder of an Amendment will also be representative men, and through them large numbers in the House would be acting in an orderly manner. The practical value of this proposition is that you bring into play the conflict of interests, and only by such conflict do we obtain substantial justice either in this House or in the world outside. The action of the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment would be called for when the Mover or Seconder of a Motion was unduly estimating the importance of the Motion or unduly prolonging the debate. It would be unwise to place the responsibility of moving the closure of every such debate upon Members of the Government; it would be calling upon them to act most invidiously. Doubtless, it will be urged that in all other Legislative Assemblies we know of, or in most of the other Parliamentary Bodies, the initiative for closing debate dwells in every Member

of those Bodies. Well, but if it were not for the peculiarity of our position we should not be engaged upon revising our Rules of Procedure at this moment. I question whether in any foreign Parliamentary Assembly such a justifiable diversity of opinion exists as exists in this House. There is no disguising the fact that we have an irreconcilable Party—in the opinion of many hon. Members of the House a justifiably irreconcilable Party in this House—and when we are engaged in making New Rules to promote the orderly conduct of debate and the promotion of Business we should take care we do not open the door for evils still greater than those from which we now suffer. It has been objected that by many propositions before the House, including my own, the Members of the Government will receive an undue preponderance of influence. My Amendment does not give the Government a greater preponderance of influence than they would enjoy under the Government proposition. The greater contains the less, and the 670 Members of this House include the Government. But my proposition fixes upon them a distinct responsibility. I would, by my proposition, keep the Government strictly to its responsibility, and deprive it of any chance of sheltering itself behind the action of a private or so-called private Member. By the adoption of some such Resolution as I propose, and by absolving Mr. Speaker from all responsibility for our debates and quarrels and differences, we shall restore Parliament once more to an Assembly of straightforward men, desirous to promote the Business of the country. Neither the Government nor a Party will be able to shelter any action of its own under the mantle of Mr. Speaker, or under the guise of any independent Member who may be ready to move the application of the closure. With a full and hearty desire that such Rules may be adopted by the House as will effectually safeguard its interests, while permitting full and fair and reasonable debate, I beg to move the Amendment which I have placed on the Paper.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment,

After the word "Member," to insert the words "of the Government, or the Mover or Seconder of the Motion then in Debate, or the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment thereto."
—(Mr. Leake.)

Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the proposed Amendment."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Radcliffe Division of Lancashire (Mr. Leake) has made a very interesting and exhaustive speech on his Amendment. It is one in which I know he takes a very great interest; but he will not be surprised to hear that in the opinion of the Government it is not desirable a distinction should be made in this matter in favour of Members of the Government, or in favour of the Mover or Seconder of a Motion or Amendment. I am not aware that at the present moment Members of the Government possess any exclusive privileges as such which places them in a different position from that of any other Members in the House, nor should I be willing to clothe the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment with any privilege which is not possessed equally by hon. Members generally. The hon. Gentleman said that the Movers and Seconders of Amendments are, as a rule, eminently representative men—that they have attained a position which justifies them in speaking for a considerable portion of the House. I recognize the fact that Movers and Seconders of Amendments are frequently eminently representative men; but if I turn to the Order Book, I find that the Movers of Amendments, in the greatest proportion, are Members like the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), who takes a great interest in the progress—or possibly the reverse of progress—of Business in this House. The hon. Member for Mid Cork stands, I believe, in the most eminent position of having given Notice of more Amendments than any other hon. Member; and he would, therefore, under the Amendment of the hon. Member for South-East Lancashire (Mr. Leake), have the right to move the closure oftener than any other Member except Members of the Government—he would have the opportunity of moving the closure on every Bill to which he has given Notice of objection. The *clôture* is an unfortunate necessity in order to regulate the Business of the House, and in order to assist the House to arrive at a decision upon important matters; but I

maintain that the course which we have suggested is the course best calculated to prevent an abuse of the power of closure. It would be most unsatisfactory, most undesirable, to make an invidious distinction between one hon. Member of the House and another hon. Member. It would certainly lessen the authority of the Government if a power was entrusted to Members of the Government which was not equally entrusted to all Members of the House. I fail to see how the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Leake) would in the least degree prevent the mode of interrupting Business which he wishes to obviate. He proposes that the Mover of an Amendment shall have the power to move the closure. What is more easy than to suggest to an hon. Gentleman, on either side of the House, that he should move an Amendment for which a responsible Leader would not be responsible, but which would attain the object in view? I regret it is necessary to restrict the liberties of Members of this House; but I decline to be a party to any arrangement which distinguishes any Member of the Government from the rest of the House. Let us be, as far as possible, equal in our rights and privileges. If the time ever comes when it may be necessary to introduce other restrictions in order to save Parliament from the destruction which may threaten us if Members are not conscious of their duty to the country, the Government of the day, I am sure, will not shrink from proposing them.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I desire to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for South-East Lancashire (Mr. Leake), because, unless we put some such restriction as that proposed upon the power of moving the closure, the exercise of the power will become one of the most common modes of Obstruction in the House. We have found recently how rapidly means of Obstruction are developed and applied; and when it is found that any irresponsible Member may, at any time, move that the debate shall close, we may have 20, 30, or 40 Members rising to have the closure applied in the course of an evening. If the power of veto is taken from the Chair, as some wish, it will be open to any hon. Member to propose the closure, and the Chair will have no option except to take a Division

on the subject. It may be that the form in which my hon. Friend (Mr. Leake) has proposed his Amendment is not a very perfect one; but the object of the Amendment is a good one—namely, that the moving of the closure should be restricted to responsible persons. Above all things, we must take care we are not opening the door to a new form of Obstruction as troublesome as any we have hitherto experienced.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): This is a subject which was discussed in the Committee upstairs. At that time I was representing the Government, and I must say I agreed with the view the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has expressed. My hon. Friend (Mr. Leake) did not get a great deal of support for his proposal in the Committee. There is great danger in departing from the traditions and constitution of the House; and certainly there is nothing more fundamental than that the Government are not regarded for the purposes of the Rules of this House as something apart from the rest of the House, except so far as particular duties are given to them. It would be extremely dangerous to set up the Government as an authority over this House at all. The House is naturally jealous of the Government, and very properly so. We cannot be expected to have unlimited confidence in a Government, especially a Government to which we are opposed; and it would not ease the thing at all to suppose that this Vote would be exercised from the Government apart from any other section of the House. I do not see we should gain any particular advantage by these limitations; and, therefore, as I could not support this proposal in the Committee upstairs, I cannot support it now.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh): I have listened to this debate in the hope that a scheme may be arrived at which will meet with the approval of both sides of the House. So far there seems to be great hesitation in the minds of hon. Members as to what the scheme should be. The object of the Amendment is to secure fair discussion of all questions brought before the House. It is generally admitted that the arrears of Business increase year after year. The increase of population in the country, the development

of our Colonies, and other important causes, have tended to increase the wants of the country. Why has this House failed to do its work? One great cause is that a large portion of hon. Members cling to laws which are totally unsuited to this age.

MR. SPEAKER: I must interrupt the hon. Gentleman. The Amendment of the hon. Member (Mr. Leake) is before the House, and we are not now on the general question which the hon. Gentleman is referring to.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT: I apologize if I have strayed from the question. I hope the Government will see its way to adopt some measure of closure which will disarm any opposition from this side of the House.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): The Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Radcliffe Division of Lancashire (Mr. Leake) is one of an important character, and I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) could not see his way to support it. The Motion of the Government means that if the Government desire to enforce the closure and to shirk the responsibility of its own action, it can get one of the juvenile Members sitting on the Tory Benches to move that the closure be imposed. If the clôtüre is imposed in the course of a discussion, it is quite evident it can only be imposed by the most responsible authority in the House—namely, the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has constantly said it is the duty of the Government to see to the conduct and progress of Business. Surely, therefore, the responsibility of applying the clôtüre ought to rest with the Government. In my opinion, the Amendment goes a little too far. I would leave the entire responsibility upon the Government.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I must protest against the manner in which the present proposition of the Government was sprung upon the House. The proposition makes a change of a drastic description in the original proposal of the Government. No reasons were given last night why the House should support the present proposal, and to-day the conspiracy of silence has been maintained. We fully admit the right of the Government to change its mind from time to time; but when it does submit

a new proposal, we are entitled to claim that we should have an ample opportunity of considering it. It is said that these proposals are rendered necessary by the obstruction offered by private Members; but I have calculated that if the House sits 40 hours in a week, that would only allow each of the 670 Members four minutes a week in which to address the House. The attitude which I take up towards these Rules is one of complete and uncompromising hostility. The Government ask the House to enable a debate to be closed whether there has been adequate discussion or not. Moreover, when such a change in the position of the Chair is being made, we are entitled to know whether the change is to be permanent, yet the Government have not yet told us whether the Rule will be made a Standing Order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not confining himself to the Amendment before the House.

MR. CHANCE: I bow to your ruling, Sir. I was proceeding to discuss the question why this Amendment should be carried, and why the Government, as the result of the carrying of this Amendment, should undertake direct responsibility for the clôtüre. I consider the clôtüre a degradation to this House, and I, therefore, think that those Gentlemen who desire the use of such a weapon should keep the use of it in their own hands. I think that instead of the clôtüre some process of devolution of business is necessary, and since the Government have taken up a decided stand against all devolution of business I ask the House to compel them to adopt the logical alternative of taking into their own hands the power of muzzling Members.

MR. HENRY GILL (Limerick): I think this Amendment is a very valuable one, because I think that if Members generally had had the power of moving the clôtüre it would be an effectual weapon in their hands to prevent the bringing on of certain Bills. Blocking Motions will be put down to prevent Bills coming on before 12 o'clock, when three or four Members will be able to combine together so as to delay the House with Clôtüre Motions beyond the time when Opposed Business can be taken. It will take some minutes to move the clôtüre, for if it is an obstructive Motion, you, Sir, must give your

reasons why you think it is against the Rules of the House, and not within the rights of the majority to enforce it. In that way some minutes will be consumed, and then there is nothing to prevent other Members rising up at short intervals and doing the same thing. In this way a deal of time may be consumed, and Members may prevent Business of a contentious character that is blocked from coming on. There are at present very few opportunities for carrying through private Members' Bills, and I maintain that this Rule will be a great encroachment upon the power they already possess. The Government will be able to *clôture* any debate they like before midnight, in order that they may be enabled to bring in Bills that have been blocked. I think these are considerations which should weigh with the Government and with private Members, who have very little chance at present of getting anything done. It seems to me that this *clôture*, which is said to be brought forward for the purpose of putting down Obstruction, may itself be made a very formidable weapon of Obstruction. As a choice of evils I think the power of moving the *clôture* should rest with the Government, as proposed by the Amendment, because I hardly think any Member of the Government would take upon himself the responsibility of doing anything to prevent a private Member from proceeding with the Business he has on the Paper.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): Having regard to the way in which the most reasonable and moderate Amendments have been met by Her Majesty's Government we cannot feel very sanguine with regard to this one. It may be said that the Government, in opposing the safeguards which we desire to put on the Statute Book for the protection of the minority and of individuals, are inconsistent with their former action; but I do not think we can expect to find consistency in the present Government, seeing that at one time they opposed coercion for Ireland, and that now they are proposing it. I think we should fasten upon the Government some responsibility for the imposition of this *clôture*. If the Amendment is not carried they will be able to impose it without being responsible for it, because we know that often when they do not wish to take particular action themselves they

are quite willing that followers of theirs should adopt the course of which they themselves appear to disapprove. I think that such liberty is not advisable, and that we should saddle the Government with the responsibility of putting the *clôture* into operation. The House will remember when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) was a Member of the Cabinet—

Mr. SPEAKER: The remarks of the hon. Gentleman are utterly irrelevant.

Mr. P. J. POWER: Then, Sir, I will endeavour to make my remarks more relevant to the subject. The great objection we have to the Government proposal is that it will enable Ministers to do that of which they do not appear to approve.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): It would be a matter of great surprise to us if the Government adopted any suggestion coming from these Benches with a modicum of reason in it. Their attitude throughout has been one of flagrant persistence in unreasonable hostility to every proposal made by the Irish Members. If the Government proposal is adopted as it stands we shall in the future have another Mr. Warton sitting behind the Ministry rising up continually like a jack in the box to move "That the Question be now put." If the Amendment be adopted, it will put the responsibility for moving the *clôture* on the right shoulders. We desire to take away from the Chair all responsibility for putting the Question "That the Question be now put."

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): If the Government do not see their way to accepting this Amendment, we shall find that next Session will commence with the discussion of another set of Procedure Rules which the Government will find it their duty to embody with the present ones. What is now being done will create new opportunities of Obstruction. We know how easy it is at the present moment for Mr. Speaker to cut short speeches which he does not consider relevant; but in the future we are likely to have a great many Motions made which have no legitimate aim whatever and which in no way advance the Business of the House. The country, I may point out, will watch the application of these New Rules very narrowly, and will, no doubt,

carefully note how the Government permits the application of the *clôture* by Members of the Conservative Party when they themselves shirk responsibility in the matter. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be a greater security to this House and to the public if the application of these Rules were left to the responsibility of the Government.

MR. THOMAS GILL (Louth, S.): Have the Government got it into their minds that private Members should be allowed indiscriminate use of the power of moving the *clôture*, or do they intend that the spirit of this Amendment shall be carried out by fixing responsibility for the application of the *clôture* upon responsible Members? It seems to me that all the Amendment proposes to do is to place a restraint upon the power of Obstruction and of abusing the Rules which is sought to be given to the majority. I must protest against the attitude of the Government whilst this important question is under discussion. I venture to think that this Amendment is worthy of the consideration of the House; but the Government sit still and mute on their Bench, and do not condescend to open their lips at all with regard to it. I have very little doubt that if the *clôture* were now in operation the Government would apply it to shut off the argument at once. It is time for the Government to rise and say whether they consider this Amendment complete nonsense, and, if they do not, what is their objection to it.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I must say I think the hon. Member is justified in the protest he has made against the conspiracy of silence entered upon by the Government. They have not stated the grounds upon which they object to this Amendment. The Leader of the House has appealed to the abstract theory of the equality of Members; but that one is not an appeal which hon. Gentlemen opposite made in the past. In 1882 the noble Lord the Member for Ealing (Lord George Hamilton) proposed an Amendment similar to that now under discussion; and I would point out that what we have to take into consideration is not the abstract theory of equality of Members, but the practical working of the Rules of Debate. How would this Rule work, passed in its present form, if 10 or 15 Members should rise and, under the cloak of wishing to

prevent undue debate, should themselves protract debate by making constant appeals to the Chair? Instead of the Amendment providing for the interference of a Member of the Government, I think it might be altered so as to provide for the interference of a Member of Her Majesty's Privy Council. This would cast the initiative on Members sitting on the Front Opposition Bench equally with Members sitting on the Treasury Bench. It is desirable that the Government should state to what extent they are prepared to meet the objections raised, and whether it is desired, under this Rule, that power should be established without responsibility.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): After the direct, intelligent, and weighty appeal addressed to the Government by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, do they still think it their duty to sit silent without making any response to the arguments which have been addressed to them in support of this Amendment? If the Leader of the House has been in any way impressed by the arguments addressed to him, and if he wishes to indicate that these arguments have influenced his mind to some degree in the direction in which we wish it to be influenced, some junior Member of the Government might now get up and indicate to the House that altered state of mind of the Government. There are times when we must lose sight of the equality of Members, and when allowance must be made for an individual possessing special knowledge of a subject, or of the wants and wishes of a particular locality. The humblest Member may at times be, for the purposes of a particular debate, on a higher level than any occupant of the Front Benches; and yet a Member rushing in from the Smoking Room, without having heard a word of his speech, may at once move the *clôture* of the debate under the Rule as it at present stands. I, therefore, support this Amendment, which will tend to put responsibility on the shoulders of responsible Members of the Government. Why, if the *Clôture* Rule were now in operation, and a Conservative Member were to stroll in here from the Smoking Room, the very fact of his seeing me on my legs would be enough to induce him to declare that the debate had proceeded far enough. With regard to the size of minorities, the time

may come when a single individual may be a minority. A single individual may have a special grievance to ventilate—and a time may come when it will be desirable that you should extend to him the protection which you are to be asked to extend to “the” minority. Hon. Gentlemen opposite deliberately yawn—

MR. SPEAKER: I must caution the hon. Gentleman that he is not speaking to the Question before the House.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: I bow to your ruling, Sir. I wish to second the appeal which has come from this side of the House that some Member of the Government should rise and tell us whether it is the intention of the Government to give some security in the direction which we demand. I admire the inflexibility of hon. Gentlemen opposite—

MR. SPEAKER: I must again caution the hon. Gentleman that he is not speaking to the Amendment before the House. Debate on these terms is impossible.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: Then, Sir, I will conclude. I intended to appeal to the Government to accept the Amendment before the House, and I thought that that appeal was in Order.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): If the ancient rights and liberties of this House were given power of utterance, I think they would state that they have been badly treated by right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench. They would complain that within less than a year they have been beloved, betrayed, and abandoned by the Treasury Bench. We, Sir, on our part, have stuck to these privileges through thick and thin. The object of this Amendment is to saddle the right parties with responsibility. We say that you are accustomed to use these privileges; we say that the whole foundation of our representative Government rests upon responsibility; and, therefore, if the Government ask for exceptional powers, we claim that they alone must use them.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not speaking to the Amendment. I must caution him to be more relevant.

MR. MAC NEILL: Very well, Sir; then I will merely say to the Government all we ask is that the privileges for which they ask they should exercise in person, and not by deputy.

Mr. E. Harrington

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I protest against the course the Government have adopted in putting on the Paper an Amendment five lines long, displacing thereby two and a-half lines of the original proposal, and only giving the House 11 and a-half hours' Notice. It would seem as if the right hon. Gentleman thought he was going, by a short cut, to get rid of the Amendments on the Paper to the two and a-half lines of the Resolution he has struck out. If the result of his wonderful management is that the House finds itself in a difficulty in considering his Amendment, and is unable to concentrate its scattered energies, and Business does not progress, he has no one but himself to blame. What does the Amendment immediately before us seek to provide? Why, that since it is the Government that asks for this power, they themselves shall exercise it in common with the Mover or Seconder of a Motion or the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment thereto. I submit that this covers the whole field of requirement with regard to the exercise of such Clôture Resolution as that which it is proposed to pass. If you do not leave the initiation of the closure to the Speaker—and you expressly take it away—if you do not follow the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1886, and have an automatic closure every day; if you leave it to a Member of the Government to ask to have the closure applied, then, I say, the whole field of requirement is covered by adopting the Amendment of the hon. Member. Of late years the Leader of the Government has come, by common consent, to be called the Leader of the House. Is it, therefore, not proper to ask that to the Leader of the House should be left the duty of applying the closure, and not to some maid-of-all-work, or some general-utility man, who will be willing to do for them what they are ashamed to do for themselves? With regard to the Mover and Seconder of a Motion, it is only reasonable and legitimate that they should have this power given to them. The Leader of the House does not often condescend to argument. He generally takes his stand on some lofty pinnacle all by himself; but, on this occasion, he has condescended to some argument. I feel bound to say that I have seldom heard such puerilities in the shape of argu-

ments come from any Member of the House—arguments so much beneath and below the necessity of the case. He told us that it would not do to allow the Mover or Seconder of a Motion to move to apply the *clôture*, because the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) had put down such a large number of blocking Notices. The right hon. Gentleman must have known that there is great difference between such a Member and the Mover or Seconder of a Motion. In 999 cases out of 1,000 the very fact that a block is put down against a Motion or a Bill is a certain safeguard that there will never be any Notice of Motion or Amendment either proposed or seconded with regard to it. The objection taken by the right hon. Gentleman, therefore, is entirely illusory. I maintain, again, that the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment to the Question before the House should have the right to ask that the debate should cease. The proposers and the opponents of a Motion should have equal rights and equal fair play in regard to putting this Rule into force. The Amendment of the Leader of the House, however, provides for something entirely different. Under the pretext of fair play and equal rights of Members, and leaving it open to every Member of the House to move this Motion, it is practically put in the power of the Government, and the Government alone, to move this Motion. That is why I object to it. I want to give the minority the right of asking that the *clôture* shall be applied where it is found that the majority are using the right of debate to obstruct the minority. You have been proceeding up to the present, in the discussion of this Rule, from the point of view that everything should be done for the majority and nothing for the minority. I say you should give a fair and equitable right to a minority, and a small minority if need be. Let us put responsibility in this matter upon the Government—let the Government act openly; and let the power contained in this Rule be extended to the minority.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I should like to know what the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House means by giving to every Member of the House what he refuses to give to the Mover or Seconder of a Motion? The action of the right hon. Gentleman

ought to be carefully watched. With his innocent smile no one would imagine he could be capable of a trick or a stratagem; and yet, on Monday night, he induced us to agree to the Bankruptcy Vote, on the understanding that no other Business would follow. Yet he immediately after endeavoured to force on further Estimates. Confidence in the right hon. Gentleman was considerably shaken by that proceeding. This Rule that he proposes seems to me to be improperly described by the term "*closure*." The word "*garotte*" would be a much better term. There is one great evil for which the House is not going to find a remedy—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not speaking to the Amendment.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: If this Amendment be not accepted the liberties of the House will be destroyed. In trying to gag Irish Members you will be destroying your own liberties.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I understand that the First Lord of the Treasury, in my absence, referred to my having put down a great many blocks to Notices of Motion. The right hon. Gentleman cannot secure for the Party of which he is the Leader the privilege this Session of a monopoly of opposition to Notices of Motion. Last Session, as the House is aware, the hon. Member for Wigtonshire (Sir Herbert Maxwell), who now occupies some subordinate position in the Government, was, practically speaking, the blocker of the Government. He blocked every Irish Bill brought before the House. Then there was the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman), who, in his anxiety to block Irish Bills, has, within the past few days, absolutely gone to the extreme of blocking a Notice of Motion which has emanated from a Member of his own Party—namely, the Municipal Government (No. 2) Bill. When things like this are done by Gentlemen opposite I think the right hon. Gentleman has no right to individualize me in connection with this question of blocking. As Leader of the House, in all fairness, he should not have singled out one Member for attack; and, further, he should not have attacked anyone without giving Notice of his intention. I always thought, when living in England, that it was un-English to attack a

man behind his back, and I trust the right hon. Gentleman will avoid doing so for the future. As to the proposal of the Government, it appears to me to be an attempt—to quote a famous American word—to “bulldoze” the minority in this House. I cannot altogether agree with the notion that a Mover or Seconder should be allowed to move the *clôture*, because, being the initiators of a Bill or a Motion, they would naturally be intolerant of prolonged discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: I must call the attention of the House to the tedious repetition of the hon. Member, and must ask him to resume his seat.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): Sir, it seems to be the opinion of the Government that the Members of this House are elected collectively; but that is not the case. They are elected individually, and as such they have certain rights, and an attempt is now being made to deprive us of those rights.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in any way referring to the Amendment before the House.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I have very few words to say before the House goes to a Division. The Amendment of the hon. Member above the Gangway (Mr. Leake) ought, in my opinion, to have been accepted by the Government. I think the Government in power should be held responsible for the application of the closure to any question before the House. That power should be vested in a responsible person, and not in some young Member, like myself for instance, or an individual who might become a tool of the Government. Now, I think that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will have the effect of placing great power in the hands of individual Members, which is liable to be abused. On the other hand, it is likely to benefit no one, and therefore I shall support the Amendment before the House.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 119; Noes 291: Majority 172.—(Div. List, No. 38.)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Sir, I propose that for the words used in the Amendment of the Government we should substitute the words “That the Question has been adequately discussed.” I think, Sir, that that is a more decent form of expression, and it

will not affect the Amendment of the Government so far as its sense is concerned. I desire that a Member, rising in his place, should at least go through the formality of proving that the question has been adequately discussed; and my Amendment is to provide some little clothing, so to speak, for the naked form of the closure. It in no way prescribes that any adequate discussion should be had; and, under the circumstances, I trust it will be open to the Government to accept the Amendment which I beg to move.

MR. SPEAKER: I have listened to the hon. and learned Member, in order to hear what he might urge in respect of this Amendment, which I have come to the conclusion cannot be put, inasmuch as it is irregular. In the first place, the hon. and learned Member proposes to substitute words for the well-known form that is familiar to the House. Further than that, he proposes that the expression shall be used, “That the subject has been adequately discussed.” But the House has already decided against the words “after an opportunity has been afforded for debate thereon.”

MR. T. M. HEALY: I submit, Sir, that when that Amendment was negatived it was upon the form of the words only.

MR. SPEAKER: As the Rule now stands, the words which the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes would have no operative effect whatever.

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): Sir, I wish I could bring to the mind of the First Lord of the Treasury and those who sit near him words which were used at the beginning of this long debate. The Government were then prepared to give candid consideration to the suggestions which might come from any quarter of the House. I am afraid their mind has a little altered since then. I am ready to admit that in the debate we have had, some of the objections which I raised have been met, and I am ready to admit also that on some of these questions the proposals of the Government go as far as we can reasonably expect them to go. But on this question of closure we contend that the Government have gone beyond the necessities of the case; and, further, that they have travelled in a dangerous direction. This subject was fully discussed in the debates of 1882, and I should

think that if these debates have taught us anything it would be that we should have a little more confidence in the House of Commons. Where are all the fears that were conjured up about the closure in 1882? Why, we are told now by a supporter of the right hon. Gentleman opposite that there is a voracious appetite for the closure. But, somehow or other, the dish cannot be swallowed without the sauce of guarantee and safeguard. What is the object of asking this House to give such securities for good behaviour and guarantees against itself? Is political self-restraint and moderation less in England than it is in all the other countries of the world? One would have thought that if the closure could have been adopted safely anywhere, it might have been so in the House of Commons long before it became the rule in other Assemblies. But it comes to this—that the “mother of Parliaments” is unable to trust herself with a power which her progeny, scattered over the face of the globe, have long been able to use with impunity. I think it is much better to make Rules of Procedure, and especially that regulating the closure, as simple as possible. If you are not prepared to grasp the nettle, it is far better not to touch it at all. On the delicate question of the interposition of the Chair, I should like to remind the House of the words of the late Lord Iddesleigh in the debates of 1882. He warned the House to consider not only the position of the Speaker, but the position of the Chairman of Ways and Means; he warned the House in considering this question to have before them not the position of the Speaker alone, who was removed from our ordinary political conflicts, but that, on the other hand, of the Chairman of Ways and Means, who may have often taken an interest in a measure and voted for its Second Reading, and who in Committee may be called upon to exercise the closure. We ought to recollect that we are giving these powers to the Chairman, equally with the Speaker. Let me ask the attention of the House to this:—What would be the position of affairs if the right hon. Gentleman accepted my Amendment that the intervention of the Speaker should not take place? The first thing which strikes the mind of everyone is that there are three objections to the simple use of the closure

by the House without any guarantee from the Speaker's intervention. These three objections are—first, that, it might be used as a means of Obstruction; secondly, that it might be used tyrannically by the Government or the majority; and, thirdly, that it might lead to surprise. With regard to the first objection, it seems to me that those who wish to obstruct have already much more powerful weapons in their hands. They can move the adjournment of the debate, and then the adjournment of the House, and so on, alternately; and not only can they make those Motions, but they and their Friends can speak upon those Motions. But the Motion for the closure is one which cannot be debated. It must be decided on the instant, and on the spot, and is, in that respect, analogous to the Motion for a Count. Surely, then, if hon. Members want to waste the time of the House, they will take the weapon best suited for their purpose and not the weakest. I will go a little farther and make this admission, in connection with the right hon. Gentleman's own proposal, that if you fear that the Motion for Closure would be used as a means of Obstruction or as a means of provoking disorderly debate, then I, for one, do not object, if it were confined to that alone, to confide the matter to the interposition of the Chair. I have the greatest objection, on the other hand, to placing on the Speaker the heavy duty which I think it is almost impossible for him to perform, of saying that the time has come for the termination of debate. One sentence more from this point of view. It seems to me that the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means already possess, or nearly possess, that power. I believe it has been held by different Speakers that where a Rule is being used manifestly for a purpose for which it is not intended, there the authority of the Speaker comes in, and the Speaker has the right to interfere. So much for the objection as to Obstruction. With regard to the objection as to the tyrannical use of the closure by the majority, I suppose by that is meant the tyrannical use of the closure by the Government representing the majority ordinarily in the House. Well, Sir, I absolutely discard that objection. As a Member of a minority, I have no fear whatever of that, because I am confident that no

Government dare use the closure tyrannically. It has been admitted on all sides, by the occupants of the Treasury Bench, by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and others. We all of us feel that if the Government were once to endeavour to use the closure tyrannically retribution would be sure and swift. If I were a Member of a minority anxious to displace a Government, there is nothing in the world which I should like to see more than that Government endeavouring to prevent free discussion in this House by using the closure in a tyrannical manner. Therefore, I say, that does away with the second objection. But there is another use which may be made of the closure, so it is said, and that is that it might be used to take the House by surprise. I do not think that could happen. We know that there is, and always will exist, between the House and the Government, communications and unofficial agreements as to the times of Divisions, and that they are faithfully observed; and, therefore, I say there is no danger whatever that the Government would, on an important question, take the opportunity of dividing at an earlier hour than that at which it was understood that the Division would take place. But there is the question of surprise which might take place if those who are ordinarily in a minority were suddenly to find themselves in a majority. But I submit to the House that the Rule, as it stands, amply guards against that kind of surprise. Now, what is that kind of surprise? I must suppose that, from some cause, the ranks supporting the Government have been very much thinned, and that those who are ordinarily in a minority are present in some force. I submit, then, that surprise under these circumstances is absolutely guarded against by the Rule as it stands, because it would require more than 200 Members, if the minority were more than 40, to defeat the Government in any such Division; and it is perfectly well known that those Gentlemen who look after the business of Parties in this House would take care that 200 Members did not assemble without their Leaders and their supporters having due warning. This Rule is being gradually elucidated by

Amendments, and by the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman himself. When the Rule was first put on the Paper, it was almost impossible to make out how the closure was to be enforced—whether the Speaker was to be asked openly by a Member rising in his place, or whether he was to be asked by a Member going to the Chair. Then, there were no directions to the Chair that anything should be taken into consideration, and there was no direction as to how the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means was to use discretion in the matter. But now we know that it is the intention to put the Question openly. Well, I think that is a little better than putting it privately, but I am not sure that there are not grave objections to it notwithstanding. I, of course, assume that there has been no private understanding before the Question is put openly. I think the idea of a Member rising in his place, and openly moving for the application of the closure, entirely negatives the idea that any suggestion is made beforehand to the Speaker or Chairman that it is desirable to move the closure. If you do not keep clear of that, what becomes of your security that the Speaker or Chairman of Ways and Means would ever be found deciding in favour of the minority? Supposing there is no previous communication with the Chair, then you place suddenly, without any warning, upon the Chair, the decision of a most difficult and delicate question. You ask the Speaker to make up his mind on the spot whether the rights of the minority have been fully observed, and, practically, as to whether, in his opinion, it is a fair and just use of the closure at the time. Now, that seems to me to be a very hard task. Those who have watched the proceedings in this House know how much time has been taken up in many debates by hon. Members who are always applying to the Speaker for assistance with regard to Motions which they are about to put on the Paper, and asking the opinion of the Speaker on very difficult questions of Parliamentary Procedure; and now you propose that, besides that, he should be always in such a frame of mind that he shall at any moment be able to say that the closure can be properly moved, and whether the rights of the minority, whatever that may mean, have been fully

regarded. It seems to me that in this we are putting upon the Chair a burden almost impossible to be borne. And of what burden or responsibility do you relieve the Chair by this proposal? I say, absolutely, of none. You call upon the Speaker to make up his mind and to give a judicial decision, whether in the negative or affirmative; and, if he gives that decision wrongly, you say you will not shield him. If the decision is wrong, the Speaker and Chairman will share in the defeat. Into the already difficult position of the Speaker you import political pressure. You do not leave it absolutely to his unfettered discretion to tell us that his opinion is that the debate has proceeded far enough; but you bring in a prompter; you urge him to give a decision; and, at the same time, you leave him the full responsibility of the decision. I, for one, dislike this divided power. I am prepared, as a Member of a minority, to face closure by the majority; but I say that I would rather face it alone. I want to see the responsibility of bringing the closure into force cast upon those who promote it. I do not conceal from myself—I admit—that, as long as the present state of things continues, you may be obliged to use the closure, and that you may be obliged to use a drastic form of closure in order to prevent things being brought to a dead-lock in this House; but I say you have no right to shelter yourselves behind the Chair. Come out, I say, and let us see where the responsibility lies. Let the country see what is the result of this policy. Do not go to the country and say—"We proposed the *clôture*; it is true that we carried clause after clause of Bills without amendment or discussion; but we had the sanction of the great and impartial authority of the Speaker of the House or of the Chairman." You have no right to shield yourselves by treating the Speaker and the Chairman in that way. If I were a Member of the majority and a supporter of the Government, I should like to see the Government I was supporting coming forward and placing the burden of this on shoulders where it ought to lie—I would remind hon. Members that the authority of the Speaker is the one thing which now stands in this House between order and absolute confusion. That position depends, I might almost say to a vital degree, on

the belief in the absolute impartiality of the Chair. Do not tamper with that authority. It is one which you may easily destroy. If you once destroy the belief in that impartiality, you will have gone far to pull down that bulwark which is the one thing that stands between us and confusion, and you will never have it in your power to rely on it again. You make a great deal of the doctrine of protection of minorities. I have no doubt that the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means would exercise great impartiality and intelligence in coming to a decision. I have no doubt that if, in their minds, the two sides of a question were so evenly balanced that it was difficult, and, indeed, almost impossible, to arrive at a judgment of what is right between the two parties, their minds would be found leaning towards the apparent or supposed minority. I do not doubt that; but I say it is not only necessary that there should be impartiality and justice, but that justice should be seen to be justice. I am afraid, as it has hitherto generally been, that the Motion for Closure will come from the majority and be supported by it; and as, if it is granted by the Speaker, it will be granted in favour of the majority, I am afraid that justice will not be seen, and that slowly and surely the belief and confidence in the absolute impartiality of the Chair will run the risk of being very much lessened. How will you be in a better position with the proposed Rule than under the Rule now in force? You cannot expedite the action of the Speaker without asking him to force his judgment. What do you gain by that? It seems to me that, when we come to the end of it, the result will be that the Speaker will be left with the same responsibility, and with the same necessity for being slow in putting the Motion for the closure into execution, and that the only thing you have done is to prevent him acting on his own independent judgment, and to compel him to wait until someone prompts him. I do not object materially to the words about "abuse," but I do object to the words about "the minority." That is a phrase we are often using in this House; but when we come to the interpretation of them, and get a decision upon them hereafter, it will be a very different story. Who is this minority? It is a term of which we have no Parliamentary inter-

pretation. I know of no minority in this House until the numbers are declared at the Table. There are minorities sitting on this side of the House which oppose, and one minority which supports, the Government. Then, what are the rights of minorities which Mr. Speaker has to regard? I am very much disposed to question whether those rights can be interpreted in any other way than this—"Has there been sufficient discussion?" Now, under the old Rule, you gave the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means two directions—first, that there should be adequate discussion; secondly, that the evident sense of the House should be that the debate ought to be closed. Upon both these questions the Speaker or Chairman had evidence before him upon which he could act, and the chief difficulty he had was in ascertaining the evident sense of the House, because the House before him is not necessarily the House which goes into the Division Lobby. Is it the minority sitting in the House that is to be only regarded, or is it the minority which may be elsewhere? It seems to me that you are giving here vague power which it is impossible to define. Our contention is, that the Speaker has enough to do, and that the Chairman of Ways and Means has enough to do, without the departure of these New Rules. When I consider the strain upon the occupant of the Chair, the long hours, the constant, keen watchfulness, and the alertness of intellect and observation which is demanded and has to be exercised, I sometimes wonder that the strain can be supported. Instead of thinking that he has not enough to do now, in my opinion he has almost more to do in these days than he can support. I do not think this is likely to be lessened. There is a habit of evil omen growing up in this House of putting upon our Rules a pressure which they will not and are not intended to bear—a habit of testing them to a breaking strain. No sooner is a decision given from the Chair than it seems as if there were active wits consulting together in order to see whether it is possible, by proving the decision to an extreme point, to bring the ruling *ad absurdum*. I entreat the House to pause before it casts upon the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means an addition to that

which they have already, a responsibility almost too grave to be supported. We feel that, after all, it is necessary to have some Rule of Closure of Debate; we desire to make it as simple as we can; and we know that we must not expect too much from it, because it seems to me that the House is engaged in dealing, not with causes, but symptoms only, and that no Rules of Procedure can restore efficiency to a Parliament which is wanting in the fundamental conditions of efficiency. In moving this Amendment, I am, at any rate, happy in one thing—namely, that I cannot be supposed to have the faintest suspicion of the fairness, ability, or integrity either of the occupant of your Chair, Sir, or of that at the Table of the House. I hope that I, and those who agree with me on this question, will always be found anxious and ready to strengthen the hands of the Speaker for the heavy burden he will have to bear, and to uphold his high and necessary authority; and it is because I entertain the deepest conviction that this proposal will have a certain tendency to weaken those hands, and sap that authority, that I beg to move the words of which I have given Notice.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "unless it shall appear to the Chair."—(*Mr. Whitbread.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Friday.

CROFTERS HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Wallace, Mr. Prowand.*)

[BILL 100.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was a Bill to extend the provisions of the Crofters Act, passed the Session before last, beyond the counties to which that Act applied, and to extend the benefits of the Act to all

crofters in other parts of Scotland. There was also a provision in the Bill to the effect that crofters might apply to the Crofters Commission, although they were not crofters in crofting parishes within the meaning of the Act. Then, he had also a provision to extend the Act to all crofters holding under leases. These were the short provisions of the Bill, and he could not imagine that there would be any objection to the taking of the second reading, which he would now move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Anderson.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, that this was a Bill which none of them had yet seen, and he therefore thought it would be quite out of the question that they should be asked to consider it, or that the second reading should be taken without their having had an opportunity of seeing its terms. The Bill was not even yet printed. No doubt, the hon. Member took a great interest in the crofters of the Highlands, and would be glad to press on his Bill; but he (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) should have imagined, if the Bill was to be proposed, and the House asked to accept the second reading, that that could only be done by the hon. Member stating to the House what were really the contents of the Bill. [Mr. ANDERSON: So I have done.] It must be a very short Bill, indeed, if the statement which the hon. Member had made was a sufficient statement to the House of its contents. He could hardly credit that the speech of the hon. Member really did give a complete statement of the contents of the Bill; but this observation one might make with some force—that if the Bill was so extremely short, as the hon. Member, in his speech, indicated, it seemed to form a very bad excuse for not having had it printed at such a time as would have enabled hon. Members to see it before the second reading was moved. He suspected, however, from all he had heard, that the Bill was not the only Bill which would be presented on the subject of the crofters; and if what one read in the papers was true, a distinguished Member of that House, who sat on the Front Opposition Bench, was taking a

very great interest in the matter. Now, he (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) would point out to the House that at that moment the Crofters' Act, which was passed last year, was in active operation. The Crofters' Commission was sitting, and had done a certain amount of its work. It was at present busily engaged in considering cases in the Island of Skye, and in some of these cases, if he mistook not, decisions had already been given. In some other cases decisions had yet to be given, and other cases had still to be heard. He thought it would be inopportune and improper that the House should entertain the second reading of a Bill the terms of which it did not know. In point of fact, they had no certification that they would be at all in the form or according to the statement of the hon. Member. However, nothing could be more certain than this—that the hon. Member was in no way tied up to the contents of the Bill by what he had stated. The hon. Member, he thought, did not even speak from a manuscript of the Bill. In fact, the course the hon. Member proposed was so unusual that he did not think the House would for a moment listen to it. If a Bill was of sufficient importance to be introduced, the House should have an opportunity of considering it on the second reading.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

—o—

BILLS OF EXCHANGE (SUMMARY JUDGMENT)

BILL.

On Motion of Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Bill to provide for the Registration of Dishonoured Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes, and to allow Summary Judgment thereon, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Thomas Blake, and Mr. Esslemont.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 185.]

JURORS' DETENTION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lockwood, Bill to amend the Law relating to the detention of Juries during the trial of felonies, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Finlay, and Mr. Baggallay.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 186.]

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 3rd March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS.—*Second Reading*—*Church Patronage** (26).

Committee—Report—Law of Evidence Amendment (23).

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after *Friday the 24th day of June* next :

That no Bill originating in this House authorising any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a first time after *Tuesday the 10th day of May* next :

That no Bill originating in this House confirming any provisional order or provisional certificate shall be read a first time after *Tuesday the 10th day of May* next :

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons authorising any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a second time after *Friday the 1st day of July* next :

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any provisional order or provisional certificate shall be read a second time after *Friday the 1st day of July* next :

That when a Bill shall have passed this House with amendments these orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended :

That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill after *Monday the 25th day of April* next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice ; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after *Friday the 20th day of May* next.

That this House will not receive any report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after *Friday the 20th day of May* next :

Ordered, That the said orders be *printed and published*, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 35.)

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — APPOINTMENT OF SIR THOMAS ESMONDE, M.P., HIGH SHERIFF OF CO. WATERFORD.—QUESTION.

THE MARQUESS OF ORMONDE rose to ask the noble Lord behind him (Lord Brabourne), Whether he intends to

bring on the Motion which stands in his name on the Paper for to-morrow (Friday) evening, relating to the appointment of Sir Thomas Esmonde as High Sheriff of County Waterford ?

LORD BRABOURNE, in reply, said, that he was glad to have that opportunity of stating that he had raised the question with regard to the appointment of Sir Thomas Esmonde entirely in consequence of communications which he had received from Ireland, and not because he had any private or personal knowledge of Sir Thomas Esmonde or his opinions. As the appointment, however, had been cancelled, and as, therefore, no public interest could be served by further pursuing the matter, it was not his intention to proceed with his Motion.

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT

BILL.—(No. 23.)

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1 *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Consent of person charged necessary).

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN, in moving, as an Amendment, the omission of the following words, "nor shall such wife or husband be an admissible witness on any such hearing," with the object of making husband or wife an available witness for the prosecution, as well as the defence, said, that as it stood the clause made the husband or wife an available witness for the defence only ; but that ought not to be the case, if it was right that everyone who could throw light on the circumstances should be allowed to give evidence. There were some cases in which the evidence of the wife alone could be available against the husband, and was the man to escape for want of legal evidence ? To give the prisoner a veto would be to create a greater anomaly than that which it was proposed to abolish. In the case, for instance, of a father committing a gross outrage on his child, which was too young to be examined, the mother might be the only witness, the prisoner would, of course, object to her being called, and a failure of justice would result.

Amendment moved, in page 1, line 13, to leave out from ("hearing") to ("without") in line 14.—(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

LORD BRAMWELL: I cannot accept the Amendment. The scope of the Bill is enabling, and not compulsory. It enables certain persons to give evidence, but does not compel them. Another reason why I cannot accept the Amendment is, that it is of the greatest importance that perfect confidence shall exist between husband and wife; and that they shall be able to communicate freely with one another, without the danger of what is said being brought up in evidence against the speaker. If communication with a man's lawyer is privileged, it is still more important that what is said between husband and wife shall be privileged.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, that according to the provisions of the Bill it was compulsory on the husband or wife of the prisoner to give evidence, if the prisoner wished it. He (the Earl of Milltown) would enable the husband or wife to be called, whether the prisoner objected or not. No doubt, the home relations might not be so happy as before, but that might happen also when a child of the prisoner gave evidence, which was allowable under the existing law. It was quite as painful and undesirable, if it could be avoided, to convict a prisoner on the evidence of a son or daughter as on that of a wife or husband.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he thought it would be better on every conceivable ground that the law should remain as it was, than that there should be such an invasion of the marriage tie as the Amendment would make.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4 severally agreed to.

Clause 5 (Witness need not give evidence as to former offence, &c.)

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN, in moving, as an Amendment, the omission of the clause, which provided that no prisoner giving evidence on his own behalf should be cross-examined as to his previous career before the jury had returned their verdict—said that such a

provision would give prisoners an unfair advantage, in having their evidence considered of equal value to that of prosecutors, when, in point of fact, the previous history of such prisoners might be such as to render them totally unworthy of belief. As the practice of the law was now, if a witness was a man of bad character he would be sharply cross-examined as to his previous life; why, then, should a prisoner giving evidence on his own behalf be exempt from cross-examination? He might have been convicted of felony over and over again, and yet, under this clause, counsel for the prosecution would not be allowed to ask a single question as to his past life. If their Lordships admitted the principle that a prisoner might be called as a witness, he thought it would be wise that the prisoner should be subject to the same rules that were applied to all other witnesses.

Moved, "To omit the clause."—(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

LORD BRAMWELL said, he quite approved of the principle of the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord, and if he divided the House upon the Amendment, he (Lord Bramwell) should, in all truthfulness, feel bound to support it. That being so, it might be asked why he introduced the clause. He did so to save the time of the House. In the Bill of last year the clause was not inserted, and the noble and learned Lord on the Front Bench opposite (Lord Halsbury) moved to insert it. Believing that the noble and learned Lord would take the same course on this occasion, if the clause was omitted, he (Lord Bramwell) had put it in with the view of saving time, although he must say he did not approve of it.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he supported the retention of the clause. The whole subject of the Bill was one in which it was necessary to strike a balance between conflicting considerations. On the one hand, it was wrong that an innocent man should be unable to prove his own innocence when all might depend upon his personal testimony; on the other hand, the prisoner ought not to be put morally upon the rack, as seemed to be done in France. He could not see how there could be any objection to the principle that it was better that they should not run the risk

of having innocent men convicted merely because, at some previous time, the accused had been in trouble. It was certainly no impossible thing that a jury might convict a man who ought to be acquitted of the crime with which he was charged, merely on account of his bad character.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment; and to be read 3^a. To-morrow.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.—(No. 26.)

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, read.

Debate resumed accordingly.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON (Dr. TEMPLE) said, the speech of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Grimthorpe) in opposition to this measure was one which it was extremely difficult to answer, and so clever that, although their Lordships did not like to be kept from their dinner, they stayed to listen. For himself, he should have given up his dinner altogether for the mere intellectual treat. He felt, however, under some disadvantage in replying to the speech because of the absence of the noble and learned Lord through indisposition. The noble and learned Lord had complained that the Bill had not been sufficiently discussed. The fact was that a Bill of this kind was never thoroughly discussed in that House, and in its present form, until it came up for second reading. But the subject with which the Bill dealt had been very largely discussed by the people at large, and especially by those who were attached to the Church; it was a subject that had been discussed for years, and a Bill like this was really the fruit of that discussion. It was through the discussion which had taken place that they had come to know what were the feelings of the people generally, and of the mass of the laity of the Church of England, on the question. The objections to the present working of the Church of England were of four kinds—first, to incompetent and

immoral clergymen; second, to the inequality of the incomes of the clergy in respect to the work they had to do; third, to the sale of advowsons; and, fourth, to the fact that under the present system of patronage the inhabitants of a parish had no voice whatever, or any chance of being consulted, in the selection of their clergyman. The Bill did not deal with all these points. With regard to the question of the sale of advowsons and the necessity of allowing the people to have something to say as to the appointment of clergymen to their parishes, the Bill was an attempt to deal fairly and justly, as far as it was possible to do so, with all the interests concerned. With respect to the complaint on the part of the parishioners that the clergyman was forced on them without their having any voice whatever in his appointment, and without their having any opportunity of making any objections to it; he could not for himself understand how anyone could deny that that was a very natural and reasonable feeling on the part of the parishioners. Considering how serious the matters involved were, how they affected the kind of religious teaching which their children were to receive, and the character of the public worship carried on in their parish church, it was impossible not to see that the appointment of their clergyman was a thing that closely concerned the parishioners. It was not very easy for those in the position of their Lordships quite to understand how strong a feeling of that sort there was in the minds of people to whom the character of the clergyman was of far greater importance than it could ever be to any one of them. The way in which the question touched their domestic life and their dealings with their children brought it home to them in a manner which their Lordships would hardly realize. The parishioners felt about it with a keenness which to their Lordships might appear to be absurd; but anyone who had been in the habit of hearing the talk of ordinary laymen would not think he was exaggerating when he said their strong conviction was that their claim to be listened to in that matter was only bare justice. Now, in order to meet that demand, this Bill provided that the parishioners should have the power to make objections; but it did not provide

that the objections so made were in all cases to prevail. The objections were to be made to the Bishop, who was to act upon them, or not, as he thought best. If the Bishop thought the objection was of sufficient importance to be so dealt with, he would place them before a Council, which was to be provided to assist him in the inquiry. That Council was a Council only to inquire and report to the Bishop their opinions on the objections. The Bishop then had to decide what he would do. If he thought, after inquiry, that the objections were well founded, then he could act upon them. But even then there might be an appeal to a higher authority, if the patron desired it. That plan had been suggested as the best mode of securing that the Bishop should not act strictly on his own motion; and provided that they secured that the parishioners should be heard, and that there should be some power of considering their objections, whether it was done by a Council, or by the Bishop, or by referring the matter to three other Bishops, he did not think that the Episcopal Bench would regard it as a very vital point. It was not the wish of the Bishops to decide the question without appeal, or that if there was an appeal it should be to three other Bishops. He felt sure that there would be no objection on that Bench to any reasonable arrangement. What they thought was that the people should feel that they were to have a voice in the appointment of the clergyman, who was to take care of the spiritual interests of themselves and their children. The noble and learned Lord had objected to all that, and had described it in the way that a very skilled advocate would do by supposing that, in every instance, there would be objections made by parishioners who had no real ground for making them; that they would rake up all sorts of gossiping stories and press them on the Bishop; that these stories would be brought before the Council, that the Council would sit in public; that the clergyman would be very thin-skinned and sensitive, and would be absolutely skinned alive in the presence of the parishioners by the questions put to him. The fact, however, was that probably in nine cases out of ten there would be no objections made at all, and in many instances the Bishop, after hearing them, would dismiss them. Al-

though there was a good deal of harm done by the present system, it was not of such a kind that if they made arrangements for dealing with it they were certain to find that the whole country would be immediately thrown into turmoil by all sorts of inquiries into the characters of all sorts of clergymen. Nothing at all like that would happen. Here and there objections might be made to the appointment of a particular clergyman, and those objections would be heard by the Council; and there was no reason at all for supposing that clergymen would be unwilling to meet them. That was the way in which, taken as a whole, the measure would work. Whether the Council would sit in private or public the Bill did not determine, though he ventured to think they would sit in private in certain cases. The highly coloured picture of the misery and torture which the noble and learned Lord the other night drew as probable to occur under the Bill was not at all likely to be realized. The objections to the working of the Church of England in respect of patronage were of two kinds—that of having no voice in the selection of the clergymen, and that relating to the sale of livings—the latter an objection which seemed even stronger in the hearts of the people. Could they get rid of the sale of advowsons with complete and perfect justice to the owners, he confessed he did not think they ought to hesitate about stopping them altogether, and at once. But that was the difficulty, and must always remain the difficulty. The owners of advowsons said—“Why, this has gone on for many years. It has been recognized by the State in every possible way; and, therefore, if it is something wrong, have you not recognized it, and are you not participants in it? You cannot put the whole burden of stopping it on us.” The sale of advowsons had been felt to be odious to the public at large for this reason. It seemed as if persons dealt with the nearest and dearest interests without any regard whatever to those interests, and without regard to anything but the money to be got out of them. People thought it a very iniquitous state of things that such matters should be dealt with altogether regardless of the feelings of the parishioners. It was quite clear that there were two very different purposes for which these sales might be

effected. A man might buy a living because he wanted to provide a comfortable berth for some particular clergyman, and it would be quite clear, in that case, he was not regarding the interests of the parishioners; or a man might buy for a very different reason, because the inhabitants were of great interest to him, and because he desired to secure the best provision for the people. They could not put these two proposals on the same footing. The purchase of a living with the view of securing a better clergyman was not the same thing as purchasing a living regardless altogether of the views of the parish, which was regarded as a great insult. And this showed very much the way in which this Bill proposed to deal with the sale of advowsons. The tendency of the Bill was to discourage those sales which shut the interests of the parishioners out of sight. That was why it was proposed not to allow sales by auction, where it was proclaimed before the whole world that they did not care about the parish, but all for money. That was in the nature of the case a very insulting thing. It was a very grievous insult. There was a scandal about it. It was an illustration of the reasons why the parishioners objected to such sales. It was for this and similar reasons that the very existence of the clerical agents was felt to be a blot upon the Church of England, which the great mass of the people could not tolerate. Recurring for a moment to the objection taken by the noble and learned Lord to the power given to parishioners to object to a presentee as over 70, he could conceive that a man of 70 might very rightly be put into a place where he had much less work to do than in his old parish. He did not believe that the Bishop could fail to recognize such a case, or that he would be unwilling to accept a man who had done hard work, and came to do easy work in some light parish. But they knew from experience that it was by no means always wise to translate such men from their old parishes in which they had laboured many years. While they remained where they were there were ties between them and their parishioners of the sweetest kind, and although they did little work their very presence was a great blessing. Put such a man where he knew nobody and he became a failure. They must give a cer-

tain amount of discretion to the Bishop. He did not mean to say that there might not be certain points in the Bill which were worthy of examination in Committee; there might be restrictions which might be differently worded; but he thought, on the whole, unless they meant to maintain to the last that a patron was to treat a living as a property and in no sense as a trust, they could not have fewer restrictions than were to be found in this Bill. As to Scotland, they had few of these sales north of the Tweed. They had not the practice there. In Scotland the people had a strong belief in the right of the congregation to have a voice in the selection of its minister; and as soon as it was known that the parishioners had very little voice they commenced the agitation which led to the dismemberment of the Church, and the sweeping away of all the private patronage, which might have remained still if only private patrons would have consented at first to some modification of their rights. They were certain to have to deal soon with the question of Disestablishment—within, should he say, the next 20 years. He expected that it would be within a shorter period even than that; and he considered it was the duty of all who valued the Church to see that the reasonable demands of the people were carefully considered and as far as possible conceded. He believed that the refusal to pass a Bill of this sort, and especially a refusal by that House, where it was supposed that the interests of the Church were specially guarded, would cause very serious risk to the Church hereafter. It would leave it open to be said that those who professed to care about the Church cared still more about their own private interests in the Church, and that they were unwilling to assent to changes or modifications of their rights which had been shown to be reasonable. It was essential to the acceptance of the labours of a clergyman in his parish that he should not be appointed without regard to the wishes of those to whom he was to minister; and the disregard of their feelings was coming to be regarded more and more as an insult. For these reasons he felt that the rejection of the Bill would seriously hurt the Church of England, to whose interests he was deeply attached.

EARL COWPER said he spoke with the sense of responsibility which natu-

rally attached to one who had the good fortune, or the misfortune, as some might think, to be the patron of 17 livings. No one could deny that there was need for reform of various kinds in the Church, and in considering what ought to be done they ought to have regard less to the attack of enemies outside than to the remedies for evils which were suggested by the experience of friends within. There was no *prima facie* evidence that a man who bought a living was necessarily unfit to hold it. On the contrary, if he or his friends were willing to give money to procure him a benefice, it would appear at first sight that in his own belief or that of his friends he was adopting what he felt to be his vocation. He knew in his own neighbourhood a living occupied by a stranger for whom it was bought by a relative, and he made a most admirable parish priest. There was nothing iniquitous in paying a worn-out man to retire. It was one of the gravest scandals to the Church that men without energy should moulder in country parishes, when paralyzed either by age or by the monotony of their lives. The supersession of such men by younger and energetic men was a benefit to the Church. Perhaps there were shocking cases of sale by auction; and this was very wrong. But so far the supporters of this Bill had refrained from mentioning any of these scandals, perhaps from anxiety to avoid sensational speeches. Those who sold livings by auction must be men altogether devoid of all sense of responsibility. It was improbable they would make better appointments if they gave livings away, for if they were disreputable men they would be very likely to appoint their boon companions. As long as private patronage existed these risks must attend it. He was not sure that so great a grievance was connected with what were called family livings, some of which were held by most admirable clergymen. Still it had been said that these livings were reserved for the fool of the family who could not make his living in any other calling. The fact was, no system of patronage was altogether unattended by evil. The way to get at the evil was to take care that unfit men were not appointed, either by private presentation or in any other manner. The only way he could see was that of strengthening the hands of the Bishops, in the appointment of whom all

Prime Ministers have felt a strong sense of responsibility. This was true not only of the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, and of Mr. Gladstone, but even of Lord Melbourne, of whom it was said he could hardly sleep at night when he had to appoint a Bishop. And there was not a Bishop on the Bench whose character and position would not secure public acquiescence in the increase in his powers. He did not like the idea of appointing a jury of Bishops. The matter had better be left to each Bishop in his own diocese. Party feeling in the Church was much exaggerated; and Christians of all denominations were beginning to make common cause against a common enemy. He did not think that Party spirit was so bitter as it was in the days of our forefathers. His own idea was that instead sometimes of being too anxious to interfere with and stop bad appointments, the Bishops were a little too humble and diffident of their powers. He hoped that if power were given and they were entitled to exercise it, something would be done to stop the appointment of unfit men. He also wished that more power existed of getting rid of incompetent men. That was a difficult matter, no doubt. It was an invidious duty to ask a man to retire and to surrender a portion of his income. He observed that the Bill gave the Bishop power to remove a clergyman who was lunatic for two years; but he thought that no hardship would be entailed in compelling every clergyman who had been unable from any cause to attend to his duties for two whole years to retire on one-third of his income. A provision of this kind he thought would be unobjectionable. Whether their Lordships could go any further than this he did not know. The matter was one which required very careful consideration. The subject of the lay element proposed to be introduced by this Bill was a very wide one; but in the opinion of many persons it was considered desirable to associate laymen in Church work. He was not quite sure, however, that to appoint a merely consultative council of this kind with no power and liable to be over-ruled by the Bishop, —the Bishop, indeed, being able to take action without them—was a good beginning for the introduction of this lay element. He was not at all sure that they

would succeed in getting the men they wanted—men of business habits, clear heads, and active dispositions. Such men, as a rule, were pretty well occupied. They might be induced to come forward by a sense of duty if they were to have any real power; but it was a question whether, if they were merely to be a consultative body, they would come forward. In this case they would only be able to obtain the services of second-rate men. No one was more impressed than he was with the necessity of consulting the wishes of the parishioners; but he thought this would be best done through the Bishops who should have more power of objecting to the appointment of unfit men. He believed the right rev. Prelates were anxious to pass this measure, and he was willing to pay great deference to their opinions in this matter. Some persons were of opinion that it was the kind of Bill to read a second time and refer to a Select Committee. But as the Bill had already been before a Select Committee it was doubtful whether it should again be referred to such a body. He did not know whether the Bill was presented to their Lordships, either to take it as it stood, or to have nothing to do with it; if that were the case he felt very much inclined to have nothing to do with it.

THE BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH (Dr. Magee) said the discussion that evening had recalled to his recollection the time when, 13 years ago, a Bill almost similar in its terms was passed through their Lordships' House, and he then advocated reforms in the Church of England. On this occasion, however, he addressed their Lordships with a feeling of extreme anxiety, because what they were asked to do by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Grimthorpe) was to refuse now and at once the second reading of this Bill. This measure had occupied the thoughts and the minds—and he did not think it was even unbecoming to say in that place, the prayers of those who had desired the reform of the Church of England for years in this matter. The main provisions of the Bill had the consent of the Primates, all the Bishops, and all the representative assemblies of the Church. The noble Earl who had just sat down (Earl Cowper) said they had to choose between this Bill as it stood or rejecting it altogether. He and his right rev. Friends were anxious

to hear objections and criticisms and to withdraw clauses which were undesirable; but they, at the same time, felt deeply, painfully, how serious would be the injury to the Church, how great the encouragement given to the Church's enemies if, in that House—which might be called a House of Patrons—an admittedly needful reform in Church Patronage was met by, he would not say contemptuous, but a curt and brief rejection of the measure which sought to accomplish it without even an attempt to discuss its clauses, for some noble Lords were not willing even to discuss the clauses of the Bill; they thought it so mischievous and rash that they were willing to reject it altogether. The noble and learned Lord who addressed their Lordships on Monday evening, seemed to put forward this idea of the Bill—that it was a rash, crude revolutionary measure suddenly evolved out of the consciousness of the Bishops, and that no such revolutionary measure had been known since the days of the Long Parliament. He asked permission to be allowed to state the true history and genesis of the Bill and to test this assertion of his noble and learned Friend by a few facts. This was a Bill founded very largely upon the lines of a measure which he had introduced to the notice of their Lordships many years ago, and for which he obtained their Assent. More than one clause in this had been taken from that Bill. In regard to the charge of its rash and revolutionary character, the proper test on the second reading of a measure was the principle as distinguished from the details. He would therefore take one enactment on which a great deal of the noble Lord's displeasure and criticism was expended. In 1874 he (Dr. Magee) himself moved for a Select Committee to consider Church Patronage. That Committee was composed of, among others, the Archbishop of York, the late Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Selborne, Lord Overstone, Lord Stanhope, the Marquess of Lansdowne, and Earl Nelson. There were only five Bishops on that Committee out of 19 Members; and a less rash, less revolutionary, more cautious, and thoroughly independent Committee was probably never got together. What was the principle of dealing with the Church patronage

unanimously accepted by this most influential and most able Committee? The noble and learned Lord made very merry over the idea of being defined as a trust patronage. He said there was no such thing as a trust in patronage; and he seemed to have no idea of anything but a *cestui que* trust. What was the principle that was laid down by that Committee? The noble Lord had laughed at the idea of there being a trust in favour of the parishioners. But when the Committee were asked what were the principles upon which the subject of Church patronage should be based, they replied that they were of opinion that any legislation affecting Church patronage should proceed upon the principle that its exercise partook of the nature of a trust and that all existing rights must be dealt with in connection with that principle. The noble and learned Lord appeared to prefer the words "limited rights" to the word "trust;" but whether the former or the latter term were used they both meant to convey that the exercise of Church patronage was the discharge of a public duty, inasmuch as the man who was to be selected for a living was to be the holder of a public office. It was a most miserable view of the question to say that when a man bought a living under the existing system it was just the same as if he had bought a doctor's practice. When a man bought a living he undertook to discharge certain distinct and very important public duties. It could scarcely be said even in the present very depressed state of the Exchequer that it would be a good thing to allow a power of appointment of a Judge to be sold; and it would not be very creditable if the person appointed was a barrister who had only the year before just managed to scrape through his examination. It was not desirable for the public policy or for the public interests that the right of appointment to livings in the Church should be sold. In his opinion the principle that ought to be laid down was that the right of patronage was to be exercised with a regard to the spiritual wants of the parish, and that a patron should be restrained by law from appointing an unfit person to a living. The noble and learned Lord had very severely criticized the action of some Bishops for having appointed their sons or sons-in-law to livings within their gift.

But, in the first place, this Bill was not aimed against nepotism on the part of private patrons; in the next place, it must be remembered that Bishops lived under a brighter light of public criticism than most men, and that any shortcomings in this respect upon their part were at once marked down. In his view, the principle of restrictions and limitations on Church patronages should be carried out equally in all cases, and should apply as much to the patronage exercised by Bishops as to that exercised by private individuals; and if there was any inequality in their favour in the restrictions and limitations of this Bill, the Bishops would be most willing and most desirous that it should be removed. He (Dr. Magee) trusted, therefore, that it would not be supposed that this Bill was intended by the Bishops to be an attack upon private patronage. He would now consider the point involving the rights of the parishioners to object to the appointment of any particular person to a living in their parish. The Committee had expressed their opinion that there should be some check exercised by the parishioners to prevent the appointment of unfit persons, and that they should have the right not to veto, but to object to the appointment of a man known to be grossly and shamelessly immoral. He himself had some doubt whether debt should not also be a ground for exclusion. The noble and learned Lord had drawn a picture of the scum of the parishes gathering together at the Blue Boar to discuss the character of their parson. The noble and learned Lord probably knew very little about the scum of our parishes. Those who laboured in our parishes could assure him that when the scum went to the Blue Boar it was for other purposes than to discuss the character of their parsons. It was earnest, pious, moral Churchmen who were grieved, shocked, and sick at heart, when men were thrust upon them of more than doubtful character, and their hands were paralyzed when they were called upon to defend the Church at fair or market. His only fear respecting this clause was that it would be practically inoperative. It was the most difficult thing in life when a Bishop received private information about the misconduct of a clergyman to get the person who sent the information to come forward publicly. He almost

always said, "Oh, leave me out, do not mention my name; you must not rely upon me." In a short time afterwards perhaps they heard it said, "The clergyman of so-and-so is leading a scandalous life. The Bishop has all the facts, and he will take no steps." Now, what he (Dr. Magee) wanted was to place the responsibility on the person who ought to bear it. He believed that nothing would tend more to satisfy the public sentiment than to give the parishioners some power of stating their objections, strictly limited to facts, and made before a properly constituted tribunal. It was hardly fair, hardly reasonable, to put the whole burden on the Bishop's shoulders. Why should Bishops be mulcted in sums varying from £1,500 to £2,000 or £3,000 in instituting and carrying on proceedings in the case of unfit presentees? Before concluding, he would say a word as to the history of the case. When, as he was glad to say, the Bill passed into the hands of the most rev. Prelate who brought it before their Lordships, the same clause which gave the parishioners power of objecting was contained in it, and it passed through Committee in their Lordships' House. The Bill had been laid before both Convocations and the House of Laymen. It was very freely canvassed and amended, and it now came before their Lordships as the Bill approved by the House of Laymen. It met with the all but unanimous assent of the Church representatives and of Lay Church opinion, and their Lordships were now only asked to consent to give it a second reading. He most earnestly entreated them, whatever they might think of details—and the Bill was, he admitted, very much a Bill of details—not to inflict upon the Bishops and the Church the pain and disappointment of a total rejection of the Bill. Let them do what they thought right in Committee, but he entreated them to pass the second reading. The noble and learned Lord (Lord Grimthorpe) had made a strong appeal to the fears of the Members of their Lordships' House. That was not the kind of argument he himself would like to address to the Peers of England. If he believed that this Bill would seriously injure private patronage, instead of believing, as he did, that it was the only measure which could preserve it, he would nevertheless say to powerful and wealthy

patrons, "Show your attachment to the Church and make some sacrifice, not only of money, but of family influence in the interest of the Church and of the country." But this Bill inflicts no such injury. Believe us when we tell you that those who seek a reform of patronage, a wise and kindly reform, are not the enemies of private patronage. They were the enemies of private patronage who scornfully rejected every proposal of reform.

"Hoc Ithacus velit, hoc magno mercentur Atridæ."

The hearts of the enemies of the Church would leap with delight if they heard that the Bishops could not induce the House of Lords to pass the second reading of a measure to reform admitted and notorious abuses in the Church of England. Rather than appeal to their Lordships' fears, he would appeal to their sense of justice—their impartial sense of justice—and to their attachment to the Church of England. Some of the details of the Bill might be distasteful to their Lordships. The Bishops were not strong enough to prevent them from Amending it. In a House of 500 Peers the Bishops were 25—and not 85—and there was but one Irishman amongst them. The Bishops were willing and anxious that their Lordships should deal as they thought right with any provisions of the Bill, but they entreated their Lordships, for the sake of the Church of England, to give the Bill a Second Reading.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he did not think that the responsibility of recommending the second reading of the Bill ought to be left entirely to the Episcopal Bench; he would therefore give some reasons why he thought their Lordships should not reject the second reading. He agreed with the noble Earl behind him (Earl Cowper) when he said that their Lordships ought not to pass the Bill with the view of conciliating people who would not be conciliated. Their Lordships ought to do what they thought right. But he disagreed with another part of the noble Earl's speech in which he said it seemed to him that their Lordships had nothing to do but to take the Bill as it was, or else to have nothing to do with it. He did not think that their Lordships should take a Bill of that importance in that spirit—they should exercise their own judg-

ment on its details. If they objected to the principle, let them reject the Bill on the second reading, but let them not do so under the idea that they must take the whole Bill as it was or reject it. The Bill was of a preventive character, and he fully believed that if its more important provisions became law it would very effectively tend to prevent the evils now complained of. It would consequently be more useful in its indirect than its direct operation; and he thought that so strong would its effect be in this way that few objections would be necessary or would be taken under it by parishioners. This was very desirable, because it was much more difficult to deal with the case of an unfit clergyman after he had entered on a particular sphere of duty than before. The difficulty of proceeding against a criminous clergyman was admitted on all hands; but that difficulty would be obviated if a charge against him were brought forward by the persons most interested, the parishioners, at the time when the clergyman's name was submitted for presentation, and if notoriously bad reputation, as well as proved criminality, were admitted as a ground of objection. The Bill did not give a power of veto to the inhabitants of a parish; but it would afford them full opportunity of submitting to the Bishop of the diocese objections—not all sorts of objections, but objections upon specific grounds defined by the Bill—which they might have to a particular clergyman before his appointment was made. Parishioners would not asperse the characters of innocent men, under such circumstances, by spreading evil reports; but, if there were evil reports, the Bishop should certainly know of them. He could not approve the view that there was no reason whatever why livings should not be bought and sold. He had always thought, however, that there was a broad distinction between the sale of advowsons and of presentations. The sale of an advowson, apart from any particular or proximate appointment to the office, did not seem to offend against any principle; but the sale of presentations was open to all the objections which could be offered to the sale of any public office or any private trust. On the same principle a man might buy a seat in Parliament, or an elector might sell his vote; but the law prohibited

this, because the office and the vote were important public trusts, with great public duties attached to them; and the man who entered upon the office, or exercised the vote, should do so not for money, but by open, regular, Constitutional methods. He could see no difference in principle between buying directly and buying indirectly—between buying a vacant living and one about to become vacant: the same thing was bought in each case, namely, the office of a parish clergyman, with cure of souls; the only difference being that between a sale in possession and a sale in reversion, even when there was no bargain or secret understanding for an early vacancy. Whether a man bought for himself, or for another, the buying, as it seemed to him, equally contravened the principle that should govern selections for offices of public importance. All the principles which prevented trafficking in other offices applied strongly to the case of the clergyman. There were two sorts of sales of advowsons—one to persons who wanted to keep them; the other to people who only wanted the next presentation. The object of the Bill was to cut off that indirect mode of selling next presentations, and to interfere with sales to purchasers whose object was not to sell again after a presentation had been made, so far only as might be necessary to accomplish that object. If their Lordships would accept the main principles of the Bill, all its details might, and ought to be, open to discussion in Committee, upon their merits.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): I agree with the noble and learned Earl (the Earl of Selborne) who has just sat down that the House will do well to read the Bill a second time; but I say so with a full sense of all the criticism passed upon the Bill and with the feeling that the Bill will require very careful attention in Committee; and I hope it will receive that attention from your Lordships, and that it will undergo great alteration. The idea was thrown out by one speaker that it should be referred again to a Select Committee. I think all that Select Committees can do for this Bill has been done, and it has emerged from them so altered, that I can hardly hope any additional advantage can be gained. We

must, therefore, attend to it in a Committee of the Whole House, and I have no doubt a useful measure can eventually be made out of it, though not, perhaps, without very freely amending it. The Bill consists of two parts essentially—I do not speak of those small, scattered provisions in detail towards the end of it—the part affecting the sale of advowsons or of presentations, and the other part affecting presentation itself. With respect to the sale of presentations, I have come to practically the same conclusion as my noble and learned Friend who has just sat down, though not perhaps exactly from the same premisses. I cannot help being struck—as the noble Earl was struck—with the practical fact that a great number of the best clergymen are people whose relatives bought them livings in the Church. It is a mode of entry into the functions of the Church which, I admit, according to strict logical principles, it might be hard to defend. But considering that the other modes consist entirely in the exercise of patronage of one sort or another—that is to say, that those who do not buy livings must obtain them by asking for them—I cannot but look with regret upon the necessity for putting an end to that mode of obtaining livings which has largely prevailed, and, in the experience of most of us, to the advantage of the Church. But, unfortunately, there is also this disadvantage, that unquestionably there is an amount of abuse connected with the sale of livings—with the agencies and with the auctions—an amount of abuse so real in its character and at the same time so crying and flagrant, and attracting so much public attention, and wounding so deeply public morality and sentiment, arousing so much discontent in the Church and a deep sense of wrong on the part of parishioners themselves; that I do not think it is consistent with the safety of the Church of England to allow things to go on as they are. I heard the other day of an instance of a kind of tenure of advowsons and the kind of agency which exists which gave me a very vivid idea of the feelings with which parishioners must regard the exercise of the existing right. It was in the West of England. There was a bank which had, I think, obtained an estate, with an advowson attached, for a bad debt. The estate was sold, and the advowson remained with the bank, and as

regularly as possible—it was a bank in Dublin—just before the living fell vacant, the next presentation was sold by the bank in Dublin, with the knowledge of the parishioners themselves, who knew perfectly well the operation that was going on in the sale of their spiritual interests. There is a feeling among many to whom their spiritual interests are most dear, that, dealing with spiritual affairs in this cold-blooded, commercial spirit, would be enough to drive great numbers from the Church, and to leave a bitter sense of wrong and resentment in those who remain. I think it is a question of feeling more than of logic, but feeling in all countries, and in this country especially, must be regarded as a fact; and where a strong feeling of this kind exists—in reference to an institution depending so largely for its usefulness upon the amount of sympathy it can excite—it is a duty to pay regard to this feeling, and to act as nearly as possible in sympathy with the people. On this ground I do not take practical objection to the part of the Bill which deals with the sale of next presentations and of advowsons; although there are questions of detail into which I will not go. But I am not so satisfied with that part of the Bill which deals with presentations themselves. I confess that the more I look at that elective Council the less I like it. It is a very clumsy device; it will be exceedingly difficult to elect; it will be an enormous amount of machinery for doing very little; and you will never get the people to attend it. It is most dangerous to introduce the elective principle into presentations. But, besides these objections, there are two which are much more serious. One of the main duties of this Council will be to hear grounds for refusing presentation to a man who has been nominated; and among the grounds that will be given will be such things as mental incapacity, debt, and some moral stain. You may call the inquiry what you like, but it will be putting that man on his trial; it will be well known he is on his trial, that his character in these respects is being canvassed by this body, and the decision at which they arrive will cling to him through life. If his moral character be stamped as bad, if his mental qualities are declared to be inefficient, even if it is stated that he is heavily burdened with

debt; by the verdict of this Council, not only will he lose that presentation, but he will have little chance of any other, and any hope of promotion, or preferment, or distinction in the profession will be closed to him for ever. It is, therefore, a very grave duty—the duty of trying a man—that this Council will have to discharge. And who are they? They are men elected by the ratepayers. In what other of your institutions do you have elected Judges to try men? We have had to change many things and alter many things in accordance with theories of an advanced character; but we have hitherto contrived to maintain the nominated character of our Judges. We have kept our elective principle at bay in respect of the Judges, and I earnestly trust we shall continue to do so. The elective principle has succeeded well in other matters; but I believe that, applied to Judges, it has terribly failed; and it has certainly been always earnestly repudiated, both by traditions and by the sound sense of the people of this country. I should be very sorry to select the machinery of the Church for the first occasion of introducing a principle so dangerous; and I think it would be hard that you should apply it, not to the cases of men who are culprits, not in the case of men accused of any crime, but in the case of men who were merely put upon their trial because they had aspired to be permitted to serve their God and their country as spiritual pastors of congregations. I feel that this is a deep objection to this principle of elective Councils. But I have another objection. The Bill takes away from Bishops their proper functions. Bishops can refuse institution if a man is unfit to hold the living to which he is presented. If the law does not give them sufficient support in that, alter the law. I speak for myself; I do not speak for anybody else. As a patron I should not be in the least afraid of entrusting a Bishop with the power of rejecting all candidates for institution, on the grounds stated in this Bill, with an appeal, of course, to the Archbishop. I believe they might be safely entrusted with that power. Whether you agree with that view or not, whether you care to provide other securities or guards, at all events let the principle of episcopal responsibility remain intact.

The right rev. Prelate who spoke with so much eloquence admitted that the use of the elective Council was principally for the purpose of screening the responsibility of the Bishops. They can only gain by assuming their proper duty, and I cannot conceive why they should shrink from doing it. That they should shrink from expense I entirely understand. I earnestly hope that something in that direction will be done. I cannot understand why they should not step forward and assume their proper responsibility in this matter. Their power is sufficient. They have the right, if any men have, to exercise their office upon their own responsibility in behalf of the only authority to whom they are really responsible; and considering how they are protected by the law—how little of any public criticism can reach them—I never could understand why so much effort should be made to cover them by special securities, or to spare them from the duty of exercising their powers on their own responsibility. Of course I do not wish to press unduly the idea of giving to them this exclusive power if it should not meet with the views of others; but I do earnestly hope that the duty will not be removed from them, and that their responsibility will not be effaced by furnishing them with an elective Council which will either be a nonentity or, if it acts at all, will entirely supersede their power and take it out of their hands. It is all very well to say that the Council will only advise just as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council only advised; but in due course of time that advice will become peremptory, and if the spirit of the Bishops is not equal to asserting their own responsibility now when they have nothing but public opinion to deal with, what chance is there of their asserting it against an organized elective Council? I fear the effacement of the episcopal office will be the necessary result of this introduction of the elective principle. There is only one other remark which I wish to make before I sit down. This anxiety about first appointments to the Church is open to the criticism that it does not touch the real danger and remove the principal evil. Undoubtedly we do suffer, not I believe to any great extent, not so much as we did in past times; or as they suffer in many other religious bodies. Still we do know that there is a certain

number of clergymen who are wholly unfitted for the duties which they have to perform, but whom we have no power to remove, and who, if we leave them in their positions, must go on disgracing their pastoral office and misusing the powers given them. This Bill does not touch that evil. Lord Palmerston once said that all children were born good. I will not run the risk of imitating his observation; but to a certain extent it is true of clergymen, that when they are first appointed they are good. When they first begin very little is known of the seeds of evil within them. The tendency to get into debt, the laziness, sometimes even drunkenness, which mark, not, mind you, a large number, but, I may say, a very small number proportionately of the clergy, have not been, I think, if your Lordships will consult your own experience and local knowledge, distinguishable when these men first came into their livings. They are developed later under the temptation of independence, and under the wear of that monotony of life of which the noble Lord spoke; and it is that evil which, developing later, forms the blot and danger of the Church. You will not remove that evil by the care you are taking with regard to first appointments. The real evil lies much deeper, and it will tax all your legislative skill much more severely, and it is a much more arduous task to undertake; but until we have provided some means by which the rulers of the Church can get rid of clergymen who are, either from moral or physical reasons, no longer fitted to minister to their flocks, we have not dealt with the greatest evil which afflicts the Church.

EARL FORTESCUE said, he agreed with what the noble and learned Earl and the noble Marquess had said, so he need hardly detain their Lordships at all. There were excellent provisions in the Bill—(1) the suppression of the sale of livings by auction; (2) the appeal to the Archbishop, which he was glad to find conceded here by the right rev. Bench, though they had, unfortunately, succeeded in resisting it; (3) the notice to the parishioners of the intended appointment; (4) the protection of the Bishops in the discharge of their duty, by sending communications on the subject to them as to the patron—privileged communications. The right rev. Prelate

who spoke first talked of giving the parishioners a voice in the appointment of their clergymen; he hoped the Bill would continue confined, as it was now, to certain specified objections which alone they were entitled to make. The Bishop also dwelt on the intense interest that was felt by parishioners in the appointment of the man upon whose efficient discharge of whose sacred duties and way of performing the services so much of the comfort and well-being of the parish depended. He (Earl Fortescue) doubted whether, except on the occasion of some political excitement, so much interest was felt in the generality of parishes. He had been a patron of livings now more than a quarter of a century; and in the course of that time—he would specify neither place nor date—he had received a numerous signed memorial from the churchwarden and many other parishioners, praying him to present to the living a clergyman who for three or four months had done duty there during the incumbent's last illness. He (Earl Fortescue) had ascertained that the memorialists had signed without having taken the trouble to inquire into the character of the clergyman, who came from the next county. He turned out, as it happened, to be respectable, and had certificates from two respectable clergymen. But, as he wrote the memorialists this, no thanks to them for all they knew; he might have been utterly disreputable and deeply in debt, though not having incurred any public censure. He did not present him, having selected another clergyman. But what a lesson did this afford of the carelessness of parishioners in recommending clergymen. Again, one of the recollections of his youth was hearing of a contest for a living, while the parishioners at large were the patrons; and of the scenes of drunkenness witnessed there for days—the two candidates having opened every public-house and beershop. Then, as to Crown—that is, Ministerial—patronage; that was decidedly the worst. Ministers charged with the affairs of the British Empire could not, and ought not, to afford much time and labour upon the selection of clergymen for livings. Nor had the patronage of the Bishops been always well exercised. *The Edinburgh Review*, years ago, gave an account, unfair and exaggerated indeed, but in the main well-founded, of the nepotism and

religious and political partizanship of Bishop Phillpotts in the bestowal of his patronage. The Chapters and Colleges generally exercised them less well than the Bishops did. On the whole, he believed it was acknowledged that the private patrons, with some exceptions, exercised their patronage best of all. And, remembering how little chance any earnest clergyman of what would now be called either Ritualistic or Evangelical opinions a century ago would have had of getting a living, or keeping a curacy, over the Bishops had absolute power, if it had not been for private patronage—he was jealous of the diminution of private patronage in the Church, as that kind of patronage secured some variety and some fairness of dealing towards men of different schools of thought. It was of great importance to the Church of England that there should be a certain amount of independent patronage clear of the prevailing pattern—or rather tone—of religious feeling; and he more than doubted the wisdom of the tendency of this Bill to increase the amount of patronage in the hands of what were called public patrons, and to diminish that in the hands of private patrons.

On Question, “That (“now”) stand part of the Motion?”

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* the 15th instant.

House adjourned at a quarter past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 3rd March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), appointed.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7); CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Vote 30; CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Vote 2.

PRIVATE BILL (by Order)—Second Reading—Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation.

PUBLIC BILL—Ordered—First Reading—Intestates' Estates * [187].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

WEYMOUTH AND MELCOMBE REGIS CORPORATION BILL (by Order).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”—(Sir Charles Forster.)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Yesterday, when this Bill was brought forward for second reading, I felt it my duty to oppose it, because, on reading various provisions contained in it, I found that they were of a somewhat extraordinary character. The size of the Bill itself is bulky; it contains a great number of pages—no less than 100; and the clauses, which are very numerous, comprise many unreasonable provisions. I know that it is unusual for an hon. Member to oppose a Bill which has been brought forward by a Municipality with which he has no connection; but still, when we look into this Bill, and see the large amount of money asked for by this Municipality in order to carry out certain works; I think it is incumbent upon us, before we pass it, to examine the accounts of the Corporation, and see whether the measure is one which ought to be passed by this House. No doubt, this measure contains a great many good provisions; and, probably, if the bad ones were eliminated, the Bill would be of great benefit to the Municipality. The object of the Bill is—

“To enable the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis to make a new Pier and new Streets and Street Improvements, to purchase the Undertakings of the Weymouth Consumers Gas Company and the Company of Proprietors of the Weymouth Water Works, and to make further provision for the Improvement and good Government of the Borough; and for other purposes.”

Now, with respect to new streets and street improvements, I have nothing whatever to say; but when I come to those provisions of the Bill which deal with the purchase of the Water Works and Gas Works, and propose to hand over those undertakings on payment of a certain sum of money to the Corporation, I think the position of this Municipality requires a little investigation. Now, Sir, the town of Weymouth, according to the Returns of the last

Census, has a population of 13,715, and the area of the parish itself is 52 acres, although that of Melcombe Regis, which is combined with it, is 1,548. The poor rates levied in the town amounted, in 1883, to £15,758; but in 1884—and this is the last year for which I have been able to obtain a Return—they amounted to £15,013, showing a considerable falling off. Then, according to these statistics, I think it is only reasonable that we should go into some of the details, and ascertain what amount of money the Corporation of Weymouth have already borrowed, and the amount which they now propose to borrow. I find, in the first place, that they have borrowed a sum of £15,000 for repairing, improving, and maintaining the harbour of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, and also £20,000 for repairing, improving, or rebuilding the outer pier or breakwater of that harbour. They do not say that that money has been repaid. It appears to have been borrowed, and a great portion of it remains, at the present moment, unpaid. By an Act passed in 1854, the Corporation were authorized to construct a pier known as the Pile Pier, and for the use of such pier to levy tolls and rates, on the security of which they borrowed £12,000. In 1859, under an Act called the Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Markets and Pier Amendment Act, the Corporation were further authorized to borrow, on the security of the pier tolls and rates, a further sum of £5,000. Subsequently they borrowed, on the security of the market tolls, a further sum of £10,000. In 1859 they were authorized to borrow, on the security of the market tolls, the sum of £1,500; and I find that they have been authorized to borrow additional sums on the security of the market tolls. They now owe the sum of £10,000 borrowed on that security for the purposes of the harbour, and on the security of the harbour tolls the sum of £21,000, of which £19,925 is still owing, making a total sum of £41,925. The Corporation then appear, with the consent of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, to have borrowed, upon the security of their Corporate estates, for various purposes, a sum of £7,000, of which sum £5,031 is still owing. In 1879, under the provisions of the Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Bridge Act,

the Corporation built a bridge, and for that purpose they borrowed, on the security of the bridge tolls, and as a collateral security the borough fund and borough rate, the sum of £6,000, of which £4,600 is still owing. The actual debt of the Corporation at this moment is £57,556. Now, when I inquire into the position of the town and harbour of Weymouth, I find that it is an old yachting station; but that so far as commercial purposes are concerned it does not appear to have improved very much since the time of George III., who brought it into fashion from going there personally in order to enjoy the climate and the good sea-bathing to be found there. I am told that it is still resorted to as a sea-bathing place, and I do not object to any expenditure which may be incurred in street improvements, and for improving the esplanade which is absolutely essential to any locality resorted to for bathing purposes. But what is it that the Corporation of Weymouth propose to do by this Bill? They propose, now, to borrow £40,000 for the harbour, £30,000 for the new pier, £41,300 for the pile pier, £11,000 for street improvements, £10,000 for the markets, and £6,700 for general purposes, although what for they do not state—making a total for the new loan they now require of nearly £139,000. Well, Sir, there was a point yesterday which I had intended to bring before the House, but to-day I will merely advert to it, because I find, on investigation, that I happen to be wrong in my surmise. I have been under the impression that the ratepayers of the town had not been convened together in public meeting in order to give their assent to the Bill for which this application was to be made to Parliament. I find that I was wrong in that matter, and therefore I will not refer to it further. In looking through the provisions of the Bill, I find a clause, on page 12, entitled "Committees of Council." I altogether object to this clause, and should necessity arise, I will take a Division upon it, because I regard it as an extremely improper clause. The clause provides that—

"For the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act the Council may from time to time appoint committees of their members and may define the duties of each such committee and may delegate to each such committee such of the powers and duties of the Corporation whether as a Municipal Body or as

the Urban Sanitary Authority or otherwise as the Council think fit and the acts and proceedings of every such committee within the limits of their delegation shall be deemed the acts and proceedings of the Council and the quorum of any such committee shall be five unless the Council otherwise direct and the Council may from time to time make such regulations as they may think fit with respect to the confirmation of the proceedings of a committee or otherwise and for the guidance of a committee and the Council may from time to time remove any member of a committee and appoint in his stead another member of the Council."

Now, Sir, this delegation of powers from one body to another is distinctly wrong, and yesterday, when I had the opportunity of meeting the very learned Gentleman who acts as your counsel, Sir, I was glad to find that this point had received favourable consideration at the hands of some of the Gentlemen who are in charge of the Bill, and which gave me reason to hope that this clause would either be materially modified or altogether withdrawn. I will pass on now to the provision in regard to the purchase of the Water Works. What is it that they propose to do? They say that—

"The Water Company with the consent of three-fifths of the votes of the Shareholders of that Company present personally or by proxy at any meeting of that Company specially convened for the purpose may sell to the Corporation and the Corporation may purchase the Water Undertaking (including in that expression the undertaking real and personal property choses in action easements rights powers and privileges of the Water Company) for such consideration and on and subject to such terms and conditions as may be agreed on between the Water Company and the Corporation."

Now I strongly object to this clause, because I think that if the Corporation intend to purchase the undertakings of this Water Company with money which is to be borrowed, the sum should be specified and the number of years named over which it is to be spread, in order that we may know whether the Corporation are really making a bargain, or are simply purchasing a white elephant. When I look into the past history of this Water Company I do not find that it appears to have been a very successful undertaking, and therefore I think it is absolutely essential that the amount of the purchase money should be specified in the Bill. There is yet another point. How are we to know that some of the members of the Weymouth Corporation may not be Directors or share-

holders of the Water and Gas Company, because I look upon one as practically including the other, although the Gas Works appear to have been doing very much better than the Water Works. If some of these gentlemen should happen to hold a position in both of these Boards as Directors or shareholders, they may be able to perpetrate a job and may endeavour to recoup themselves in a large sum of money by the sale of undertakings which are not worth one-half of the amount they are going to receive. I shall certainly require a full explanation upon these points; and I think that, in the first place, the sum agreed upon as the purchase money should be specified, and whether any members of the Corporation now occupy a position on the Board of Directors, or as shareholders, in either of these Companies. Clause 46 provides that—

"From and after the transfer and subject to the provisions of this Act all the rights powers privileges and authorities of the Water Company under the Waters Acts and under any enactment for the protection of the Water Company or the Water Undertaking including the right to levy demand receive and recover any rates rents and charges which the Water Company may demand receive or take shall be by virtue of this Act transferred to and vested in the Corporation and those Acts and enactments shall be read and have effect as if the Corporation had been therein named instead of the Water Company subject nevertheless and according to the provisions of this Act and to the following exceptions and provisions (namely):—

- (1) The provisions of 'The Companies Clauses Consolidation Act 1845' incorporated with the Water Acts shall not apply to the Corporation:
- (2) None of the provisions of the Water Acts in any manner relating to the share or loan capital of the Water Company or to any limitation of the amount of profit to be received by them or to the constitution meetings by direction of the Water Company shall apply to the Corporation."

Now, this clause does not specifically state what the Corporation may charge for the water. If the Water Company in the past has not been successful, the Corporation, in order to make the undertaking pay, ought to be entitled to charge more than the amount charged in the past, and it is, therefore, important that we should have some explanations on these points. I pass from the Water Works to the sanitary portion of the Bill. Clause 64 relates to notice to be given to the Corporation of

persons suffering from infectious diseases. Before I go into this subject, I may tell the House that upon various points under this head of infectious diseases there appears to be a considerable amount of divergence of opinion among the people of Weymouth themselves and the medical officers of that town. I find, in the first place, a provision that—

“If any such inmate be suffering from any infectious disease the occupier or the person having the charge management or control of such building (or if such occupier or person be prevented by reason of such disease then the person in charge of such inmate) shall so soon as he shall become aware of the existence in any such inmate of any such disease forthwith give notice thereof to the Medical Officer of Health at his office.”

I do not object to that, but in sub-head 2 there is a provision which I cannot help regarding as curious, at any rate. The sub-head says—

“If such inmate be not a member of the family of such occupier or person the head of the family (resident in such building) to which such inmate belongs or if there be no such head or if such head be prevented by illness then such inmate (unless prevented by reason of such disease or of youth) shall on becoming aware of the existence in such inmate or in his own person as the case may be of such disease forthwith give notice thereof to such occupier or person.”

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to go through the clauses of the Bill in this manner.

DR. TANNER: I bow to your decision, Sir, and I will merely draw attention, if you will permit me to do so, to this one clause relating to infectious diseases. The sub-head speaks of the occupier becoming aware of the existence in an inmate of the Home, or in his own person, of an infectious disease. Now, if he becomes aware of the existence of small-pox or cholera in his own person, how can he possibly give notice of the existence of the infectious disease? The medical officer, on becoming aware that any person is suffering from an infectious disease, is required forthwith to give notice; but I do not see how it is important to require the person infected to give that notice himself. Finally, let me call the attention of the House to one provision in this Bill which strikes me as being of the most vital character. Clause 175 provides that—

“A Judge of any Court or a Justice shall not be disqualified from acting in the execution of

this Act by reason of his being liable to any rate or other charge thereunder or by reason of his being a member of the Council.”

That means that if the Judge or Justice happens to be in any way included in this Gas Company or Corporation he will not be disqualified from pronouncing an opinion on any of the points which may afterwards crop up. I am glad to see, however, that there is a provision in the Bill which is underlined—namely, Clause 55, that matters in difference between the Water Company and the Corporation are to be determined by arbitration.

COLONEL HAMBRO (Dorset, S.): I cannot but think the hon. Member has taken a very unusual course in opposing the second reading of this Bill, which, as the House must be aware, is a Bill of an entirely private character. He has informed us that he knows nothing of the locality in regard to which the Bill is promoted. Indeed, he informed me himself that he had never the pleasure of being nearer to Weymouth than somewhere off the Bill of Portland. His opposition of the Bill, therefore, cannot have arisen from any desire to benefit the ratepayers of Weymouth, and I rather imagine his real object has been to stave off the discussion which the House desires to enter upon at a later period of the evening.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is not entitled to attribute motives of that kind to the hon. Member.

COLONEL HAMBRO: I am sorry that I made the remark, and I withdraw it at once. This Bill, which has been introduced by the Corporation of Weymouth, is one similar in character to those which are constantly being projected by Municipal Corporations. It is purely of a local character, and its objects have been stated by the hon. Member. Perhaps he will allow me to supplement his statement by remarking that the Bill also seeks to consolidate the Harbour Trust and the Harbour Pier Trust; to consolidate the Corporation and their Market Trust; to provide for the purchase of the existing Gas and Water Works; to make various street improvements; to provide for the erection of a new pier and the improvement of the existing pile pier; to carry out certain improvements on the esplanade parks; to borrow money for improvements; to

make bye-laws and purchase lands ; and to exercise various powers in regard to infectious diseases, besides granting a municipal stock, by means of which money may be borrowed at a cheaper rate than under present circumstances. If this Bill had received the slightest opposition from the ratepayers of Weymouth, I might have had something to say about it myself, and I should certainly not have been heard here to support the second reading. But the measure has not been introduced in a hurry. First of all, it was under the consideration of the Town Council, where it received the approval of an absolute majority of the Council. After that the resolution of the ratepayers was taken at a public meeting, and a motion was passed in favour of it. Not content with that a poll of the town was taken, and a very large majority of the inhabitants declared themselves to be in favour of the Bill. The Town Council again had a meeting after the Bill had been deposited, and passed a resolution by a large majority approving of the provisions it contains. Having done that, the Corporation obtained the consent of the Local Government Board, of the Treasury, of the War Office, of the Admiralty, and of the Board of Trade to the provisions of the Bill ; all these consents being granted subject to certain modifications in various clauses of the Bill. This Bill is absolutely necessary, in the opinion of the ratepayers of Weymouth, for the improvement of the harbour and town. The hon. Member for Mid Cork has pointed out that the amount of money already borrowed is £57,956 ; but under the Local Government Act the Corporation is allowed to borrow up to two years' rateable value, which would amount to a sum of £130,000. I have no desire to detain the House with any explanation of the provisions of the Bill ; but I would point out to the hon. Member for Mid Cork that Bills of this description are not Bills which are usually discussed on the second reading. If he is acquainted with the course of procedure on measures of this kind, he will know that as soon as the Bill has been read a second time it will be handed over to a Committee of this House, by whom every clause and line of the measure will be carefully gone through and examined with the assistance of the Legal Authori-

ties of the House. It will also be carefully investigated by the House of Lords, if it happens to be referred to that House hereafter. I can only hope that the hon. Member, when he becomes more fully acquainted with the facts, will not insist upon opposing the Bill. I may add that the Water Works to which he has referred, instead of being an unmarketable speculation, is most highly remunerative. I hope, under all the circumstances, the hon. Member will allow the Bill to be read a second time.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) : I quite agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down that the main objects of this Bill are of an exceedingly laudable nature ; but, at the same time, I am afraid there are certain provisions in the measure which are objectionable, and that the attention of the House should be called to them, especially as the Bill is not likely to be opposed upstairs, and the provisions of it will, consequently, not be fully gone into by a Committee. I make no reference to the proposed street improvements, or the works in connection with the harbour and the pier. I assume they are of a desirable character ; but I think that some of the points which have been raised by my hon. Friend are entitled to consideration from the officials whose duty it will be to watch the Bill in Committee and to strike out and modify any of the clauses of the measure which may be found to be objectionable. If I understand the provisions of the Bill aright, the Corporation is authorized to treat with the Directors and shareholders of the Water and Gas Companies ; even although some of the members of the Corporation may be Directors and shareholders of those Companies themselves. I maintain that that is a provision which ought to be struck out of the Bill. It is a provision which is perfectly indefensible. If negotiations are going on with regard to the price at which these undertakings are to be purchased, I think it would be the duty of gentlemen so situated to resign their position in the Town Council, so as to allow gentlemen who have no interest whatever in the Gas and Water Companies to make an arrangement with the Corporation. I also think it would have been more regular if the Bill had stated the basis upon which the valuation of the undertakings of these two

Companies has been made. The Bill gives no information at all upon that point. The prices at which the works may be purchased may be double what, according to the ordinary rules of valuation, would be considered fair and reasonable. Another awkward fact is, that in the provision which relates to rating for water purposes, if the maximum of rating power be reached which the present Water Company enjoy, there is no power, in case of a deficiency, to pay such deficiency out of any other receipts. Therefore, I think it is possible that the ratepayers may hereafter be called upon to pay a much larger sum than they ought to pay. I think my hon. Friend was justified in calling the attention of the House to the defects of the Bill; and I hope the Chairman of Ways and Means, when the measure comes into Committee, will see that it is in a proper form before it is allowed to pass this House. Having said so much, I think my hon. Friend would do well not to put the House to the trouble of a Division. He has done his duty in calling attention to the subject; and I hope he will not now press his opposition further.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND) — TRIAL OF PETER WHITE AND OTHERS, CHARGED WITH MOBING AND RIOTING AT MOTHERWELL.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the trials at Hamilton of Peter White, Alexander Tennent, and John Clark on 26th January last, and of Timothy Ward, Andrew M'Cuskar, and James Martin on 27th January, all steel workers, on a charge of mobbing and rioting at Motherwell, on 4th October; whether, in the first trial, the jury, after a very short deliberation, found the three prisoners not guilty, and in the second trial the Procurator Fiscal, after leading evidence, withdrew the charge against all the three prisoners; whether a special defence of alibi was pleaded by Tennent, Clark, M'Cuskar, and Martin, and given effect to by the verdict of the jury; whether Ward was, at the conclusion of the other

trial, convicted on a separate charge of assault committed at the same time and place; and, if the above circumstances are correct, whether he will inquire into the circumstances of the case, and take steps for giving some redress to these five innocent men, especially the four who were acquitted on the ground of mistaken identity?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to these cases. The statements in the second, third, and fourth paragraphs of my hon. Friend's Question are substantially correct. Upon the evidence laid before the Crown Counsel it was absolutely necessary that the men referred to should be tried. There are no public funds in the hands of the Lord Advocate out of which any payment towards the costs of an accused person could be made; and as I can find no circumstances indicating anything improper in calling upon these men to stand their trial, I do not see any reason to ask for a special Vote of money in their case.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MR.

JOHN REDINGTON, SUB-SHERIFF OF CO. GALWAY.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following incident at the Connaught Winter Assizes, held at Sligo, as reported in *The Freeman's Journal* 23rd December 1886:—

"Mr. John Redington, Sub-Sheriff of the County of Galway, deposed, in reply to Mr. Le Poer Trench, Q.C., 'I have been Sub-Sheriff for the past thirteen years.'

* * * * *

"Will you swear that you were at Saunders' two hours before sunset?—I did not know when the sun set. I did not know there was a section in the Act of Parliament regulating evictions that an eviction could not be carried out two hours before sunset.

"Have you frequently directed men after the legal hour?—I don't know;"

and, what steps he proposes to take in view of the ignorance of the law confessed by this officer?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Any person feeling aggrieved by the action of the Sub-Sheriff has a legal remedy. The Government are not responsible for any neglect of duty on his

part. If the ignorance of this Sub-Sheriff has been to the injury of any other person, proceedings can be taken against him.

WAYS AND MEANS—COMMISSIONERS OF INLAND REVENUE—RETURN OF INCOME TAX — DIVIDEND WARRANTS OF RAILWAY COMPANIES.

MR. HALSEY (Herts, Watford) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have intimated to the London and North-Western, and other Railway Companies, that they

"cannot, as heretofore, accept the statement portion of the dividend warrant as a voucher in support of a claim for the return of Income Tax, until such statement has been verified by the Secretary of the Company ;"

and, if so, what is the object of imposing upon those concerned the additional trouble caused by this change from the long-established practice ?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): In reply to the hon. Gentleman's Question, I have to say that, though the words he quotes do not appear in any letter which the Inland Revenue authorities can trace, they represent fairly enough the rule which they have laid down. Originally the Railway Companies inserted in the dividend statements the names of the proprietors of the stock; and the Inland Revenue accepted these statements, in support of an application for return of Income Tax, without further verification. The Companies, however, have since 1880, no doubt to save clerical labour, been discontinuing the insertion of the proprietors' names in the dividend statements; so, to avoid these statements being made the foundation of fictitious claims for return of Income Tax by persons not the registered proprietors of the stocks, it has been found necessary, where claims for repayment are made, to require the production of a verification signed by the Secretaries of the Companies. The Companies prefer this to inserting the proprietors' names in all the statements, as they formerly did.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEER FORCE—THE CAPITATION GRANT—RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RECENT COMMITTEE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for

War, What decision he has arrived at as regards the recommendations of the recent Committee on the Volunteer Force with regard to the increase in the capitation grant, the travelling allowance to ranges, and the premium on complete equipment?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): I must ask my hon. Friend, whose interest in the Volunteers is well known, to restrain his impatience for a few days more. The intentions of the Government with reference to the Volunteers and the recommendations of the Committee are explained in my Memorandum accompanying the Army Estimates, which will be circulated very shortly.

MERCANTILE MARINE—SHIPWRECKS ON THE GLAMORGANSHIRE COAST —COASTGUARD STATION AT SOUTHERNDOWN.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, having regard to the serious loss of life from shipwrecks which have recently occurred on the Glamorganshire coast, between Porthcawl and Nash Point; the Government will provide a coastguard station at Southerndown, with a rocket apparatus, and a system of signals, by which the life-boat station at Porthcawl can be signalled when vessels are seen to be in distress?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The question of placing an additional apparatus on this part of the coast—namely, one between Porthcawl and Nash Point, is one that has received the very careful consideration of the Board of Trade on several occasions, and the Board have been advised that it is unnecessary. The question of establishing a Coastguard station at Southerndown is for the Admiralty and not for the Board of Trade; but the Board are advised that in any case Southerndown would not be a suitable place for a rocket apparatus. I am in communication with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution as to the necessity for signals being placed at Southerndown as a means of signalling to the Porthcawl life-boat.

INFLAMMATORY LANGUAGE (IRELAND)—SPEECH OF LORD ROSSMORE AT THE CAMLA ORANGE HALL, MONAGHAN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the report in the *Monaghan Northern Standard*, of 12th February, of an address delivered in the Camla Orange Hall, by Lord Rossmore, in which he used the following language respecting the Right honourable the Member for Mid Lothian:—

“I am afraid I cannot warm to my work like the ‘Grand Old Gabbler,’ and talking about him reminds me of a thought which struck me to-day. You have all heard of the mad dog we have had in our midst lately. You know the misery his presence has caused. Well, I say if a human mad dog is loose, who wilfully and wantonly destroys thousands of people, what ought to be done with him? The man dog ought to be done away with before he infects any more ignorant people with the snapping and snarling of his Home Rule rabies, which rabies, brethren, do so much harm to mankind when bitten by them;”

and, whether, if the report is true, the Government intend to take any action in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): No, Sir.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I do not understand the answer. Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether he communicated with the noble Lord and asked him if the report was correct?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have answered the Question.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I will put the Question in another form.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—PRE-TRANSFER TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

Mr. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.) asked the Postmaster General, If he is aware that a large number of pre-transfer telegraph clerks, who were induced by “The Telegraphs Act, 1868,” to enter the service of the Postmaster General, are now, after more than 20 years, only receiving, as “telegraphists,” salaries varying from 33s. to 50s. per week; and, whether it is within his knowledge that immediately an officer of the Post Office, or the Telegraph branch of the Post Office, is officially designated a “clerk” he is at once

entitled to the salary and privileges attaching to that title in the office at which he is located; and, if so, whether a pre-transfer clerk, who is a “clerk” to all intents and purposes in the Post Office Service, is entitled to a clerkship of the same value as that in force in the post office where he is stationed; if that is not so, what are the privileges by which the Act of 1868 entitles such pre-transfer clerks?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that of the officers formerly in the service of the Telegraph Companies and now in the service of the Post Office a large number have obtained promotion; while the remainder, though on a scale of wages not exceeding 50s. a-week, are much better off than they were under the Companies. The officers and clerks transferred to the Post Office were, in the language of the Act transferring them, to

“be deemed to be, to all intents and purposes, officers and clerks in the permanent Civil Service of the Crown, and to be entitled to the same but no other privileges.”

The meaning of this I conceive to be simply that, in such matters as tenure of appointment and title to pension, telegraph clerks were to be in the same position as other Civil servants, and certainly not that their salaries were to be regulated otherwise than with special reference to the duties to be discharged.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT) — TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS, “HOUSE OF COMMONS.”

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) asked the Postmaster General, If he will be good enough to arrange, for the convenience of hon. Members, that in telegrams sent to them addressed to this House the term “House of Commons” shall be reckoned as one word, and not three, as at present?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): This is a matter in which I could not act without the concurrence of the Treasury; and as any alteration of the present rule would affect not only the House of Commons, but, at any rate, many Public Offices, I must take time to consider the question.

SIR RICHARD PAGET asked, whether it would not be easy for the Department to get over the difficulty if the Speaker were formally to enter the registered address of that House?

MR. RAIKES: I believe there would be no objection in the Department if the address of this House were registered as "Commons." At the same time, it will be for the authorities of the House to consider how far that might be generally desirable, having regard to the fact that some delay occurs in the transmission of telegrams in consequence of the additional difficulty of sorting them.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.) inquired whether, if a telegram were addressed to "Parliament," it would be delivered at the House?

MR. RAIKES: I presume that if the address of the House of Commons were registered as "Parliament," telegrams would be delivered at that address; but it is a question whether the authorities can do that without trenching on the privileges of the other House of Parliament.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND) — CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOL-KEEPING BY TEACHERS.

MR. LEAHY (Kildare, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a rule of the Commissioners of National Education that first class teachers may be depressed in classification should their schools not maintain a fair standard of proficiency; and, if so, whether first class candidates will be allowed to go forward for promotion upon merely giving notice of their intention?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): By a long-established rule all teachers are liable to depression in classification should their schools decline in usefulness and efficiency; and satisfactory school-keeping must be regarded as a necessary condition in allowing teachers to seek promotion in classification.

ADMIRALTY—NAVAL LIEUTENANTS—RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONS IN TIME OF PEACE.

GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the applications from Lieu-

tenants, Royal Navy, to resign their commissions have been refused, contrary to usual custom in peace time; and, if so, whether it is necessary to have recourse to the enforced service of officers in consequence of the serious incompleteness in the establishment of Lieutenants in the Royal Navy?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is the case that during the latter part of last year applications from lieutenants, Royal Navy, to resign were, unless under very exceptional circumstances, refused. It was considered necessary to do so in consequence of the dearth of officers at the time; caused principally by insufficient entries of cadets in past years, and partly by the increased complements of lieutenants allowed to ships in commission. This necessity was, however, of a temporary nature, and is passing away. It is by no means intended to retain officers who wish to resign their commissions beyond the time during which it is considered indispensable in the public interests that they should remain. The Admiralty have no wish to retain officers in the Navy against their will.

NAVY—THE DOCKYARDS—THE SHEERS AT PEMBROKE DOCKYARD.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he has been informed, by very good authority, that the sheers at Pembroke could be completed in six or eight months if the work were carried on with proper energy; and, whether the *Aurora's* boilers would require to be put in before that time?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is anticipated that the *Aurora's* boilers will be ready to be placed on board early in March next. Even if the proposed shipbuilding programme for Pembroke Yard had rendered it advantageous to enter on the expense of erecting new sheers during the ensuing year, it is very doubtful whether they would be ready as early as March next.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—THE TRIAL OF THE WALKERS—CHALLENGING THE JURY.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland,

Is it intended that the trial of the two Walkers for the murder of a policeman and a soldier during the Belfast riots should take place in Belfast; and, if so, what, if any, instructions have been given as to "stand asides"?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): Yes, Sir; the case of the two Walkers shall be tried at the next Belfast Assizes. Although the case arose out of the Belfast riots, there is no reason to believe that such a case shall not be fairly and impartially tried there. The only instructions as to "stand asides" that ever have been issued are the instructions which I have already communicated to the House. Of course, these instructions will not be departed from in this case.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Arising out of this Question, can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether he gave instructions in writing mentioning the very names of the men who were to be asked to stand aside in the recent political trials in Dublin?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

STREET IMPROVEMENTS (METROPOLIS)—CHARING CROSS STREET—THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he will take into consideration the advisability of widening the lower portion of Charing Cross Street between the National Gallery and St. Martin's, either by cutting off an angle of the National Gallery, or removing the steps of St. Martin's, as the road is there reduced, where the traffic is heaviest, from a width of 130 to 45 feet?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): Everyone must, I think, agree as to the advisability of widening the lower portion of Charing Cross Street between the National Gallery and St. Martin's Church; and it seems to be obvious that this could be best accomplished by the removal of the steps of the church, which now project into the road at the corner where the traffic must be much heavier than on the western side. I myself believe that such a change might be made without any architectural disfigurement; but I have no authority in the matter. As to cutting off an angle of the National Gallery, if my hon. and gallant Friend

means by that pulling down a portion of the building itself, I should feel bound to resist such a proposal. If he means cutting off part of the enclosed space in front of the building, that is a question for the Metropolitan Board of Works, whose property it is.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) inquired whether notice would be given to the House before anything was done in regard to the removal of the steps?

MR. PLUNKET: I have no authority in the matter. An Act of Parliament would be required.

MR. KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the question of cutting the steps of St. Martin's Church was brought before that House some years ago; that it was fully debated; and that the scheme was thrown out by a large majority?

MR. PLUNKET: There was a Bill before the House and that clause was dropped; but whether there was a strong opposition to it or not I do not know.

PRISONS (GREAT BRITAIN)—PRISON LABOUR—MAT-MAKING.

MR. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is a fact that such a large quantity of mats of one class are made in prisons that the authorities are obliged to sell them continually below the regular list price; and, if so, whether he will take steps to insure mat-weaving in prisons being spread over the whole range of the list, so as to prevent the excessive manufacture of one class of mat; whether, in view of the injury done to employers of free labour by the jobbing of prison labour to certain mat-making firms, the Government will take steps to put an end to the system; and, whether it is a fact that a former official in one of Her Majesty's prisons has had for some years the disposal of the labour of four or more prisons?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): It is not a fact that large quantities of mats of one class are made in prisons, nor that the authorities are obliged to sell them continually below the regular list price. The assortment of mats made is the same as that which existed when the Government took

over the prisons in 1878, and the mats are sold at approved rates fully equal to those of private makers. The mat-making is spread, as far as possible, over the whole range of the list; and though the demand regulates, to some extent, the quantity of each class of mats supplied, none of the 10 classes are neglected. Considering the rates paid for the labour, it does not appear that any injury is done to the employers of free labour by the jobbing of prison labour to certain mat-makers. Large reductions have, however, been made in the number of prisons where this work is carried on, and efforts are being made further to reduce the number. It is the case that a person who hires labour at four of Her Majesty's prisons was formerly an official attached to the Prison Service; but he left the Service nearly 30 years ago.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—TEACHERS—MR. JAMES A. IRWIN, CARRICKAWILKIN, CO. ARMAGH.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Board of Commissioners of National Education (Ireland) have yet investigated and reported upon the alleged connection of Mr. James A. Irwin, teacher of Carrickawilkin (County Armagh) National School, with the Orange Society; and what is the result of the inquiry?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The case is still under investigation.

LAW AND POLICE—THE RECENT SOCIALIST DEMONSTRATIONS—(METROPOLIS).

MR. FISHER (Fulham) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can furnish any information as to the number of extra police employed at the meeting of the Social Democratic League in Trafalgar Square on the 29th of August, 1886, and of the demonstration at St. Paul's on the 27th of February, and on similar meetings and demonstrations; what was the amount of extra pay granted to the police who were then employed; what was the number of extra hours which such police had to serve; what was the approximate cost to the ratepayers of

London, and to the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, of the preparations on the part of the Government to meet any disturbance of law and order on those occasions; and, whether the Government will consider the desirability of taking any steps to prohibit such meetings in the future?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The number of police employed at the meeting of the Social Democratic League on the 29th of August, 1886, was 2,373; at the demonstration at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 27th of February, 1887, 3,094; the City Police especially employed on the latter occasion were 746. The amount of extra pay granted to the Metropolitan Police on these two occasions was in all about £20, the amount of travelling expenses about £120. The approximate cost of the special employment of Metropolitan Police on these occasions was, therefore, about £140. The question of regulating such meetings in the future is now under my consideration.

POLICE CLOTHING—THE SYSTEM OF CONTRACTS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether Messrs. Herbert, Brothers and Co., of Bethnal Green Road, E., contract with the Government to do a portion of their clothing; whether most of the work contracted for by that firm is sub-let to a middleman, who has to deposit a sum of £500 as security; whether this middleman again sub-lets the work to a second middleman, who also has to make a deposit as security; whether the work is then distributed amongst the "sweaters," who take the work home and get the work-people to work for low wages and during long hours; whether the places where the work is actually done are unhealthy "dens;" whether the work-hands are compelled to buy tea, coffee, and sugar on the premises under the penalty of a fine of 2s. 6d., or dismissal; whether the said firm employ a large number of foreign Jews on the premises, paying them at a lower rate of wages, on account of their ignorance of the English language; whether he will institute an inquiry; and, whether these circumstances constitute a violation of the Factory and Truck Acts?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Chief Inspector of Factories has made inquiries into this matter, and he informs me that this firm have formerly contracted for police clothing, but are now engaged in other work. None of the work is sub-let to middlemen, and no deposit of money is made; but recently, owing to want of space, some of the work has been given out to old workmen of the firm, who do the work themselves and employ their own work-people. The work is done in the ordinary tailors' work-rooms and not in living rooms. Most of the *employés* are of the Jewish persuasion. The men work long hours; but the women work late only on Thursday, which, I believe, is the regular custom with the Jews. I know nothing of the rate of wages; but I am told that when work is plentiful a good wage is obtainable. The firm supply tea on the premises, which the work-people can purchase at their option. There is no fine or dismissal in the event of their refusing to do so. I do not propose to institute any further inquiry; for, as far as I can ascertain, there is no violation of the Factories or Truck Acts.

WAR OFFICE—(ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—AMMUNITION, &c. — SOLID-DRAWN CARTRIDGE CASES.

COLONEL HUGHES - HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, If he will state the cost of solid-drawn cartridge cases per 1,000; whether these cases are made entirely at Woolwich, or by any private manufacturing firm, other than Muirhead, Latimer, Clark, and Co; and, whether it is not a fact that the solid-drawn cartridge can be used several times for making fresh cartridges, an advantage not possessed by the Boxer cartridge?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The average cost of solid-drawn cases for Martini-Henry cartridges has been £2 7s. per 1,000, and £2 11s. for the Enfield Martini, and they have been made by several firms. No separate solid cases, but only complete cartridges, have been ordered from the particular firm in question. It is a fact that the solid-drawn cartridge case has the advantage over the rolled case that it can be used several times.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — THE MILITIA (IRELAND) — SUPPLY OF MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES.

COLONEL HUGHES - HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in view of the fact that the English and Scotch Militia battalions are, and have been for some time, supplied with the Martini-Henry rifle, the Militia battalions in Ireland will be similarly supplied this year, instead of being allowed to train, as heretofore, with the obsolete Snider rifle?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): The Snider rifles, with which the Irish Militia are now armed, will be exchanged for Martini-Henry rifles as soon as the number in store of the latter arm will justify such a measure; but I fear that the exchange cannot take place in time for the present year's training.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY — SUPPLY OF FIELD GUNS.

Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it be true that the field guns attached to No. 8 Battery, 1st Volunteer (Devonshire) Brigade, Western Division Royal Artillery, have been taken away, and are to be replaced by heavy guns, the battery being turned into a garrison battery; whether it is still intended to issue a large number of field guns to Volunteer Artillery; and, whether these guns have been removed against the urgent recommendation of the Officer Commanding Auxiliary Artillery, Western District?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): In the mobilization scheme which has been approved for home defence, certain batteries of Volunteer Artillery are allotted as garrison artillery for the large coast fortresses in their neighbourhood. This particular corps is allotted as part of the garrison of Plymouth; and its practice should, therefore, be carried on in forts or fixed batteries. The guns withdrawn will, consequently, not be returned to it. With regard to the general question of Volunteer Artillery, their armament, and their position in the general scheme of

national defence, I propose to make a statement in the Memorandum which I shall submit to Parliament with the Army Estimates.

GUN LICENCES (IRELAND)—CASE OF JAMES MAYE, ARDFINAN, CO. TIPPERARY.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, To state on what grounds was James Maye, of Ardfinan, County Tipperary, refused a licence for a gun by the Sessional Magistrates; whether the gun belonged to Maye's uncle, lately deceased, and was taken up by the police on the death of the owner; whether the police advised Maye to apply for the licence, so that they may restore the gun; and, whether Maye has a licence to carry arms on his farm at Corrin Fermoy, County Cork?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The licensing officer did not consider this a case in which a licence should be issued, and I see no reason to interfere with his discretion.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: What did he do with the gun? Was there a confiscation of the gun?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I will inquire about that.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—CASE OF JAMES CLERY, ARDMOYLE, CASHEL—CONDUCT OF AN EMERGENCY MAN.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at the eviction of James Clery, Ardmoyle, Cashel, County Tipperary, on the 4th instant, an emergency man, named Robert Millet, presented a revolver at a crowd of about 300 people, and placed it at the breasts of a few persons; whether Clery demanded his arrest by the District Inspector Green, who was in charge of the police, and who declined to act except on a warrant; whether Clery and witnesses of the alleged assault went to Colonel Mansergh, the nearest Magistrate, and asked for a warrant for Millet's arrest, and were told by him that he had got no warrant in the house; whether Clery and witnesses then applied to Denis Scully, Petty Sessions Clerk, Cashel, who peremptorily refused a form of warrant,

saying, "he would not put any magistrate in a difficulty;" and, whether he will make inquiries, with a view to facilitate the operation of the law in this and similar cases in the district mentioned?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The alleged assault was not witnessed by any of the police, and the officer in charge declined therefore to make the arrest; but referred the complainants to a magistrate. Colonel Mansergh, to whom they went, was of opinion the case should be dealt with by summons. The Clerk of Petty Sessions merely declined to issue a warrant without directions from a magistrate, and pointed out it was a case for a summons. This view of the case was subsequently supported by the Cashel Bench of Magistrates, and the Executive sees no cause to interfere.

FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—CARRIGAHOLT PIER, CO. CLARE.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether £11,000 of the £13,500 cost of erecting the pier at Carrigaholt, County Clare, were granted by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners, for the express purpose of enabling fishery smacks to come in at all states of the tides; whether, as it has been designed by the Engineers of the Board of Works, it will afford that accommodation; whether the design of the engineers of the Board of Works is to put an elbow or bend on the pier; whether it is the intention of the engineers, or those responsible for the works, to leave the building of this elbow addition to some future time; whether the pier will then be unsuited for the purposes for which it was originally intended; whether representations have been made to the Board of Works by persons in the locality of the necessity and advisability of running out the pier into deep water; whether the Board of Works have declined to accede to these representations, and adhere to their own design; whether, if to admit vessels at all states of the tide (as originally intended) the pier will afterwards be extended into deep water, and the elbow, if erected, must be removed; whether that would entail large outlay which might be avoided by carrying out now

the suggestions made to the Board of Works; and, whether there is any objection to lay upon the Table all the correspondence on the subject of this pier, including any recommendations made by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The amount of grant proposed by the Fishery Piers and Harbours Commissioners for the pier at Carrigaholt was £13,500. The pier at present under construction is that sanctioned on the recommendation of those Commissioners, and will run out into a depth at low-water spring tides of eight feet; being the maximum accommodation that can be obtained for the money available for the construction of the pier. To make it suitable for first-class fishing vessels at all stages of the tide, it would be necessary to extend its length so as to have not less than 12 feet in depth at low-water spring tides, but this would cost an additional £12,000, none of which is forthcoming. The design approved for the work has a cant or elbow at the outer end of the pier, and this portion is now being proceeded with. To have merely extended the pier direct without the cant would have left the harbour exposed without reaching deep water, as supposed; the depth at the head of the pier would, in fact, have only been increased by a few inches. The Board of Works, though most anxious to meet the wishes of those interested, have had no means for carrying out any other work than that originally approved and sanctioned. I see no public advantage in laying the correspondence upon the table.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE BILL—EXTENSION OF THE IMPOST TO THE METROPOLITAN AREA.

MR. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.) asked the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether, in the event of the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill passing the second reading he will undertake to propose or support Clauses in Committee by which a proportionate share in these Duties will be secured to those districts which are outside the Metropolitan area, but which, nevertheless, now contribute to the Duties?

Mr. Jordan

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask a further Question, Whether, in case the efforts of my hon. and gallant Friend to obtain the insertion of such a Clause are unsuccessful, he will undertake to vote against the third reading of the Bill?

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG) (Middlesex, Hornsey): In reply to my hon. Friend, I beg to say that when the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill has passed the second reading, and has been referred to a Committee, I, on behalf of the Corporation of London and the Metropolitan Board, will propose, or support, the introduction of a Clause for the application of a portion of the duties to the requirements of districts outside the Metropolis, but within the area of the duties. In regard to the second Question, I beg leave to decline to answer it. If the hon. Gentleman likes to put it on the Paper I will consider whether I will do so or not.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Can the hon. and gallant Gentleman afford any estimate of what proportion of the duties should be paid over to the parishes outside?

SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for doing his best to put me and my Friends into a position of very great difficulty. It strikes me that is a matter for the Committee to decide, and when the Committee has decided it we will accept it.

SIR CHARLES PALMER (Durham, Jarrow) (for Mr. JOICEY) (Durham, Chester-le-Street) asked whether there is any arrangement or understanding with the Corporation of the City of London to make any payment jointly towards the expenses of promoting meetings in the Metropolis in support of their Bill for the renewal of the Coal and Wine Dues; or whether the Metropolitan Board itself has supplied, or is supplying, any money for this purpose?

SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG: There is no such arrangement or understanding as the hon. Member alludes to; and the Metropolitan Board has not supplied, and is not supplying, any money for the purpose of promoting meetings in support of the Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—BANKERS' ACCOUNT OF THE MACROOM BOARD OF GUARDIANS—TRANSFER OF ACCOUNT.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that the Board has declined to accept or recognize the reasons set forth in an unanimous Resolution of the Macroom Board of Guardians on the 29th January for changing the accounts of the union from the National Bank (Limited) to the Munster and Leinster Bank (Limited), and whether the Board are now prepared to sanction such a change; what were the reasons which actuated the Local Government Board in refusing to sanction the change of treasurership; whether it is a fact that the National Bank dishonoured the cheques presented by the union at first, when their overdraft did not exceed £1,493 1s. 5d., and, secondly, when the overdraft was diminished to £1,077 6s. 7d.; whether such action on the part of the said bank has seriously embarrassed the union for several months, most of the officials and contractors not having been paid for several months; whether several of the contractors have threatened to discontinue supplies; whether the Munster and Leinster Bank offered the union accommodation to the extent of £2,000; and, whether the Local Government Board will see fit to sanction and promote the change of treasurer in the said union?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I understand that most of the statements in this Question are substantially correct; but there seems to have been lately some change in the situation, for it does not appear that the Guardians are now making any representations as to financial difficulties, the treasurer having cashed all cheques presented.

HORSES—PROHIBITION OF EXPORTATION FROM GERMANY TO ENGLAND.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he can give, or suggest, any remedy to Mr. W. Bramley, who, before the issue of the decree prohibiting the exportation of horses from Germany, purchased there and paid £3,000 for horses to be exclusively used in England, and who has been prevented by the Ger-

man Government from exporting these horses at a great and continuing loss to himself?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I regret very much that there is no remedy for the misfortune on account of which Mr. Bramley is suffering. It is incidental to the precautionary measure of prohibiting the export of horses from Germany.

MERCHANDIZE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL—HALL MARKING OF WATCH CASES.

MR. WIGGIN (Staffordshire, Handsworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether Her Majesty's Government, before proceeding with the Merchandize Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill, will confer with the Governors of the Birmingham Assay Office, seeing that out of 1,156,748 watch cases marked during the last three years, Birmingham marked 651,171, London 409,788, and Chester 95,789?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Department is not unacquainted with the practice of the different assay offices, including Birmingham and Chester. It is, indeed, particularly indebted to the assay master of the Birmingham office for information recently afforded on matters affecting the assay of watch cases; and it hopes to have the opinion of the Governors of the different assay offices in giving practical effect to any new regulations for the marking of watch cases.

NAVY — THE DOCKYARDS — FATAL ACCIDENT AT PORTSMOUTH DOCK-YARD.

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to the circumstances in which a labourer, named Walter Weeks, lost his life while at work in Portsmouth Dockyard on the afternoon of Friday last; whether there are any regulations in force in the Royal Dockyards forbidding men to adjust straps of the kind that this man was adjusting at the time of the accident while the machinery is in motion; whether arrangements could be made for re-adjusting such straps while machinery is in motion without any risk of danger to life; and, if so,

whether the Admiralty will consider the advisability of at once carrying out such arrangements; and, what compensation will be made to the widow and children of the deceased Walter Weeks?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I regret to say that Walter Weeks lost his life from becoming entangled among the machinery while adjusting the strap for turning some portion of it. There are no regulations forbidding men to adjust the straps while the machinery is in motion, and it would hardly be practicable to carry them out if they existed. Arrangements for adjusting the straps without risk are, as far as possible, already made, and this is shown by the scarcity of accidents from this cause occurring at the several yards. Any improvements in the existing arrangements which suggest themselves would, as far as possible, be carried out. The compensation that can be made to the widow and children must be governed by the regulations laid down for accident cases. The amount will not be known until the circumstances are fully reported.

CENTRAL ASIA—REINFORCEMENT OF THE CHINESE GARRISONS IN TURKESTAN.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If it is true that the Chinese garrisons in Turkestan are being strongly reinforced; and, whether this reinforcement has been carried out in pursuance of an understanding between China and England for the protection of the latter's Eastern Empire?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): No information on the subject has reached Her Majesty's Government.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POST OFFICE AT WHITTY'S CROSS, CO. WEXFORD.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether an application has been made for the establishment of a post office at Whitty's Cross, Blackwater, County Wexford; whether complaints have reached him of the inadequacy of the present postal arrangements of the district; and whe-

ther the matter will now be considered by him?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Applications for a post office at Whitty's Cross have at various times been received; but the amount of correspondence to be benefited is found to be far too small to warrant the expenditure involved.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—THE BROOKE ESTATE—COOLGREANY.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What were the reasons for the evictions recently carried out by Captain Hamilton on the Brooke Estate, at Coolgreany; if Captain Hamilton's conduct, in acting as Sheriff on the occasion, was legal; if it is a fact that two of the tenants evicted—namely, John O'Neill and William Ford, owed the landlord no rent at all; and, if it is a fact that the landlord was indebted to O'Neill for work done?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I have no information which would enable me to answer the third and fourth paragraphs of this Question. I presume the reason for the evictions was that the tenants had not paid their rents. I am not aware that Captain Hamilton acted as Sheriff, and I do not see how he could have done so.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE CHALLONER SMITH COLLECTION OF MEZZOTINT ENGRAVINGS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If, in view of their extreme historical interest and peculiar artistic value to the Irish people, the Government will have the Challoner Smith Collection of Mezzotint Engravings purchased for the Irish National Gallery?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: Representations have been made to the Treasury by an unofficial Committee in favour of the purchase of this Collection; but the Treasury declined, having no funds available for the purpose.

AFRICA—THE GOLD COAST—CONTEMPORATED ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY ENGLAND.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is contemplated to include any fresh territory in the British Protectorate on the Gold Coast; and, if so, to what extent, and on what conditions?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Two additions have recently been made to the Gold Coast Protectorate. 1. The small territory of Krikor, a strip of land about 20 miles by six, lying to the east of the Volta, between Awoonah and Afoo; both of which were already under British protection. It was desirable to accept the offer of Krikor for administrative and fiscal reasons, and the Treaty was ratified by the late Government in June last. 2. On the North-West confines of the Protectorate, adjacent to Gaman, an independent State, the addition of the Kingdom of Sefwhi to the Protectorate was authorized by my Predecessor. The object was to secure the freedom of the roads through it, as they are important trade routes; and the necessity of securing them has been strongly urged on Her Majesty's Government by merchants interested in the Colony. The principal conditions are freedom of trade routes and cessation of slavery. No responsibility is involved of defending the country against any Native aggression.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—NOTICES ISSUED BY THE DEPUTY SHERIFF, CO. WATERFORD.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the police in the County Waterford have, in some instances, refused to serve notices on jurors issued by the Deputy Sheriff appointed, by Sir Thomas Esmonde prior to the date on which Sir Thomas Esmonde received the communication from the Lords Justices purporting to remove him from the position of High Sheriff; and, if so, on what grounds; and, on what grounds the Irish Government took exception to the appointment of Mr. L. C. Strange, solicitor, as Sub-Sheriff by Sir Thomas Esmonde, and on what day they

decided that such appointment was objectionable?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I am informed that the police did not refuse to serve any notices on jurors issued by the Deputy Sheriff prior to the date of Sir Thomas Esmonde's receiving the communication from the Lords Justices. They would not be justified in serving notices issued by the Deputy Sheriff after that date. Mr. Strange had identified himself with the Plan of Campaign by attending and speaking at meetings, and his appointment was part of the previous conduct of Sir Thomas Esmonde referred to in the letter of the Lord Justices of February 21.

MR. P. J. POWER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has not approved of the appointment of the Sub-Sheriff of Dublin County, who earned an unenviable notoriety in connection with the Tory Party seven years ago?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: It is not my duty to approve or disapprove of the appointment of a Sub-Sheriff. The Government can only act with regard to a Sub-Sheriff through the medium of the Sheriff who appoints him.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—(TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WEXFORD AND ENNISCORTHY.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the state of the telegraphic communication between the towns of Wexford and Enniscorthy; whether, under the existing arrangement, all messages from Enniscorthy to Wexford must be transmitted first to Dublin, and thence to Wexford, and *vice versa*; whether the result of this system is that it frequently takes less time to send a message between these towns by rail than by telegraph; whether a very considerable telegraphic business is transacted between these towns; and, whether he can now see his way to grant the prayer of the Memorial recently addressed to the Secretary of the General Post Office, Dublin, by the merchants and traders of Enniscorthy, asking for the establishment of direct telegraphic communication between these towns?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): My attention has been called to the subject of the hon. Member's Question; and while I am unable to grant the request that direct telegraphic communication should be provided between Wexford and Enniscorthy, because the amount of business between the two towns will not warrant the expense of providing and working a direct wire, I am prepared to expedite the transmission of telegrams by improving the existing means of communication. The daily number of messages is about eight, and the average time of transmission 15 minutes.

NAVY—THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT—DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) (for Admiral MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he has observed that what appears to be the full text of the instructions to the Intelligence Department of the Navy has been published in the newspapers; and whether this was done with the sanction of the Board; and, if not, whether he proposes to take any steps to prevent the publication of documents of an evidently confidential character by some person or persons in his Department?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The document in question was confidential, and the information which led to the publication of the instructions to the Intelligence Department constituted a grave breach of trust on the part of someone in the Admiralty. Means were recently adopted which it was hoped would have stopped the supply of information to the public except through the authorized channels. In a large and scattered establishment like the Admiralty reliance must, to a large extent, be placed on the good faith of its staff. It is much to be regretted that this sense of integrity has been found wanting in some one member of the Establishment unknown. The Admiralty will not cease to use every endeavour to prevent the publication of such papers in future.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Can the noble Lord say whether the Admiralty made any investigation as to

the previous leaking out of a memorandum on precisely the same subject?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: A very careful and elaborate inquiry was made, and I believe the means were ascertained.

MR. CHILDERS: Can they be stated without disadvantage to the Public Service?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: It became public by means by which a great many other documents have become known—through the waste paper basket.

ARMY—RANK OF MEDICAL OFFICERS.

SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, since relative rank of the Medical Officers of the Army has been abolished, what rank, if any, they now have in the Army?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): A medical officer holds the rank in the Army which his commission confers upon him; and under article 125 *a* of the Royal Warrant it is provided that, for purposes of precedence, allowances, and widow's pension, medical officers shall rank with combatant officers as there laid down. As a matter of fact, the abolition of the term "relative rank" has not altered the position of medical officers in any respect whatever.

GREAT BRITAIN AND VENEZUELA—CESSATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS—PROTECTION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the cessation of diplomatic relations between this country and Venezuela, If he is prepared to state what action has been, or is proposed to be, taken for the protection of British subjects and their property in the latter country; more especially in the disputed territory adjacent to the Colony of British Guiana, now under the administration of the Venezuelan Government?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): It is expected that the German Government will consent to undertake the protection of British subjects and their property in Venezuela during the suspension of diplomatic re-

lations with this country. The Commander of Her Majesty's Naval Forces on the Station has been instructed to arrange for the protection of the persons and property of British subjects in the disputed territory, which is not under the administration of the Venezuelan Government, as stated in the Question of the hon. Member.

POST OFFICE—APPOINTMENTS TO
POSTMASTERSHIPS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) who had on the Paper the following Question—To ask the Postmaster-General, Whether it is the fact that he has several times lately, and, if so, in what particular cases, when a Postmastership salary of £120 in England or £100 in Scotland or Ireland has been proposed, cut the proposal down and given a salary of £119 or £99 as the case may be; whether, in any and what cases posts have been conferred upon persons connected with or related to himself; and, if so, whether in accordance with or contrary to the recommendations of a Committee of the Heads of Branches in the Post Office; whether such Committee have or had actual knowledge of the work of all the men concerned; and, whether he was himself acquainted with their work?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The hon. Member for the Western Division of Cornwall has sent me Notice that he proposes to defer his Question; but I hope the House will allow me to take the earliest opportunity of replying to it. I have to say, Sir, in reply to the hon. Member's first Question, that on two occasions only in England and one in Scotland, to the best of my knowledge, since I have been in Office, I have reduced the proposed salary of £120 in England or £100 in Scotland to £119 or £99 respectively. There has been no such case in Ireland in my time. There was, I believe, one recent case in which the salary of an Irish post-office was so reduced; but that was done by my Predecessor (Lord Wolverton). In the following cases I have raised the salary to above £120 or £100 respectively—Ambleside, Cullompton, Denbigh, Enfield, Fakenham, Hayle, Keswick, Launceston, Llangollen, Sowerby Bridge; and in Scotland, Jedburgh and Turriff; and in Ireland, Fermoy, Letterkenny, Nenagh, and New-

towards, and to these may be added Listowel. As regards the second Question, I have to say that I have in no case conferred any post on any person related to myself; though I can assure the hon. Member that I should not have shrunk from doing so if I had thought such an appointment a proper one in the interests of the Public Service. In one recent case I have promoted to the first class a gentleman whom, together with three or four other deserving clerks, I was requested to supersede by a junior officer. This gentleman belongs, I believe, to a family connected by marriage with another branch of my own; but I have not, and never had, any personal acquaintance with the gentleman in question or with any member of his family. I have no doubt that the Secretary, and those whom he may have consulted, had actual knowledge of the work of the clerks concerned; and I should not have declined to act on their advice if I had not satisfied myself, by inquiry in the Department, that to do so would have been, in my opinion, an act not only unfair to the particular gentleman whom I have promoted, but also injurious to the Public Service, by its discouraging effect on the class to which he belonged.

IRELAND—MORTGAGES AND CHARGES
ON LANDED PROPERTY.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the Government intend submitting proposals dealing with mortgages and charges on Irish landed property to the House; whether they will allow payments made in respect of tithe-rent charges, quit rents, and Crown rents, on Irish estates to be reduced in the same proportion as the rentals of such estates have been reduced; and, whether, when Legacy and Succession Duty has been paid within recent years on landed property in Ireland—the value of which property has since been greatly diminished—they will allow the amount of Duty paid in excess of the value to be returned to those who paid it?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): My hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury has already answered the third paragraph of this Question, to the effect that the law directs that Legacy and

Succession Duty shall be assessed on the value of the property at the time when the event happens which gives rise to a claim for duty. On the first and second paragraphs I can only say that the recommendations of the Royal Commission will be carefully considered by the Government; but I cannot hold out any hopes that mortgages can be dealt with.

NAVY — H.M.S. "BELLEISLE" — THE "BROAD ARROW AND MILITARY MAGAZINE."

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been drawn to the statements in *The Broad Arrow and Military Magazine*, to the effect that the *Belleisle*, instead of being only six weeks absent from the Kingstown Station,

"Is ordered to be out of the hands of the Dockyard Authorities by the 24th of May, in order to take part in the great Naval Review of the 20th of that month, and is then to proceed on a cruise that will necessitate her absence from Dublin Bay till August;"

and, whether the absence of the vessel will, therefore, be six months instead of six weeks, as previously stated; and, if so, whether the *Belleisle* will be replaced during the time on this important Station?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I cannot be answerable for the statements published in *The Broad Arrow*, and can only repeat that the re-fit of the *Belleisle* will take six weeks. The annual cruise of the Reserve Squadron usually occupies another six weeks. There is no intention of replacing her with another ship while she is absent from her Station.

LUNACY LAWS CONSOLIDATION BILL — INCORPORATION OF "THE IDIOTS' ACT, 1886."

MR. SALT (Stafford) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If it is proposed to incorporate "The Idiots' Act, 1886," in the Lunacy Laws Consolidation Bill of the present Session?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The subject, as my hon. Friend is aware, has been brought under the attention of the Lord Chancellor by the Lunacy Commissioners, and the matter is now under consideration. It would, however, be premature to arrive at any conclusion on the subject before the Amendment Bill

(on which the consolidation depends) has made further progress; and the question is the more important, because the legislation with reference to idiots was deliberately severed from the Bills relating to lunatics in the last Parliament.

LICHFIELD CHARITIES—LOWE'S CHARITY.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, What steps, if any, have been taken with the view of securing to the inhabitants of Lichfield a direct representation on the Board of Trustees of Lowe's Charity in that city, in accordance with the Resolution of the House passed on the 18th of May in last year?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Lowe's Charity at Lichfield is now regulated by a scheme established by an Order of the Charity Commissioners made on the 26th of March, 1886, which provides for the appointment by the Town Council of Lichfield (as representative Trustees) of five Trustees out of 12. No proceedings are pending before the Commissioners for any variation of that scheme. With regard to the Resolution of the House of the 18th of May, I beg to refer the hon. Baronet to the answer I gave him on the 3rd instant.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDS— INVESTMENT.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will take into consideration the question of investing the sum of £1,378,817 19s. of the funds of Greenwich Hospital, now in Three per Cent Annuities, in Australian, New Zealand, or Canadian Government Loans, yielding about 4 per cent, and thus effect a yearly saving of about £13,788 for the benefit of the Greenwich Pensioners?

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) (A LORD of the ADMIRALTY) (who replied) said: After certain re-investments, which are already sanctioned, have been carried out, the amount of Greenwich Hospital Funds standing in Three per Cent Annuities will only be about £945,000. These funds are public trust money; and it is not deemed advisable to transfer the investment to the Colonial loans mentioned in the Question of my hon. Friend,

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION).

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.), who had the following Notice of Motion on the Paper:—

“That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon certain charges, brought under the notice of this House by Mr. Howell, Member for the North East Division of Bethnal Green, and Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for the Borough of Northampton, alleging improper use and malversation of public funds of the Corporation of London, by or with the consent of members and officials of such Corporation:—That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they do take evidence on oath,”

said: I should like to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether he can state what course the Government are going to take with regard to my Motion? I understood he promised to say to-day.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): There will be no opposition on the part of the Government to the Motion which I understand the hon. Member has put on the Paper. I think, however, it would have been better if the hon. Member had set out in his Motion the charges which he proposes to bring against the Corporation; but I assume he is prepared to lay them before the Committee specifically when it meets.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will consent if the Committee as nominated does not include my hon. Friend the Member for North East Bethnal Green and myself, to an Instruction which I shall move, giving my hon. Friend and myself power to call and examine witnesses before the Commission?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is hardly reasonable that I should be asked to anticipate the course which the Committee of Selection may take. I propose that the Committee of Selection shall take the entire responsibility for the nomination of the Committee; and if the two hon. Members (Mr. Howell and Mr. Bradlaugh) are not named on the Committee, then will be the time for them to make an application to the House.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Then, if the Committee of Selection does not so name us, I give Notice that I shall move such an Instruction to the Committee.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7).

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £30,960, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Constabulary Force in Ireland.”

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): This is not the first time that I have directed the attention of a Committee of this House to the growing charge of the Irish Constabulary. I recollect that shortly after I entered the House, in the year 1881, I opposed this Vote, which has always seemed to me to be a shocking and disgraceful waste of the public money of England. The Irish Constabulary, of late years, has always been maintained on a war footing. I remember on one occasion a declaration being made by the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) that the opinion he had held for years was that the maintenance of the Irish Constabulary, as a military force, was a standing and lasting disgrace to the English Government. The right hon. Gentleman added that he looked forward confidently to the near approach of a happier time, when this expenditure would be cut down. That speech was delivered five or six years ago. But has the expense of the Irish Constabulary been cut down? Instead of having been diminished in any way, it has been augmented year by year. This year we have already passed Estimates amounting to £1,397,153 for the maintenance of the Constabulary Force of Ireland, and we are now called upon to vote a further sum of £30,000. The Constabulary of Ireland have legitimate duties to perform which, at the present moment, they entirely neglect. They leave crime altogether undetected and unpunished, in spite of the monstrous sums which are expended on them. Now, I maintain that if the force were not

required to perform other duties besides those connected with the detection of murderers and robbers, it could be maintained in a liberal manner and with efficiency at the comparatively low cost of £400,000 a-year. What does that mean? We hear of Ministers leaving the Cabinet because they desire to see economical arrangements effected in the Army and Navy; and here in Ireland—although we are accused of desiring to plunge our arms elbow deep into the pockets of the British taxpayer—we are willing to make you a present of £800,000 a-year. I feel bound to say that if the present policy is continued the cost of the Irish Constabulary will soon reach £1,500,000, or, perhaps, £2,000,000 a-year. What is the reason we are asked to vote this sum of £30,000 additional? Not because we have not already provided for the extra pay and travelling expenses of the Constabulary, because for years we have had to vote heavy sums for those purposes. Indeed, it is the best paid and best cared-for Police Force in the world; but still, when the men are sent out to assist in carrying out evictions, it is necessary to give them a large additional sum per day for extra duties—a sum far larger than any hard-working man in Ireland could hope to obtain from a day's labour. The House has already voted a sum of £62,500 for extra pay and travelling expenses this year, and we are now asked to increase that sum by over £30,000, making in all £93,467, for extra allowances and travelling expenses. A more monstrous waste of the public money was never made. I am afraid that I must trespass at considerable length on the attention of the Committee while I direct the attention of hon. Members to the way in which this money has been squandered in Ireland, not only for utterly useless purposes, but for purposes of the gravest possible mischief—with this result only, that the uselessness of the police in Ireland is made more manifest day by day. As a Police Force they are of no value whatever, and they are chiefly used in parading about the country as if they were a foreign force in the occupation of an enemy's territory; and they have been employed in assisting in evictions and in protecting Government reporters. This Estimate for travelling expenses and extra allowances deals only with

three matters—first of all, suppression of public meetings; secondly, the carrying out of evictions; and, thirdly, the protection of reporters sent by the Government to report the words of any man who dares to open his mouth in Ireland. The system has been going on for the last six years without anyone rising to explain what good has been done by it. The Government never get a conviction, and they might as well dispense with these police reports altogether. No doubt there is an accumulated number of them; but who, in the name of Heaven, will ever read through them? Hundreds and hundreds of speeches have been reported which would fill that Table if they were piled up together, and they have been reported for no object under the sun. As to the first item in these Estimates, in looking over the detailed list I have certainly been led to believe that the Government have not honestly prepared it. I believe they have been ashamed to come before this Committee and tell us the sum they have lavished in Ireland in carrying out evictions during the last two or three months. If the Committee could only realize the large sums of money that have been spent in these evictions, they would arrive at a conclusion that the time has come when, if the public could know how the money has been spent, they would rise up in rebellion and put a stop to it. There are items here for car-hire, railway fares, and marching money for carrying out the duties described in the sub-head—namely, evictions and suppression of public meetings, and the total amounts to £11,164. I have been told, on very good authority, that the car-hire alone in the eviction of four families on Lord Clanricarde's estate at Woodford came to £1,372. It is told of one man that he went to these evictions with an old and dilapidated car and a broken-down horse which he had borrowed from a neighbour. When he returned from Woodford he was enabled to buy himself a new car and a horse. He appears to have been paid £13 for horse and car-hire to enable him to attend the Woodford evictions. Now, be it remembered that the whole sum in dispute was exactly £50, and the entire rental of the four farms from which the tenants have been evicted came to the enormous sum of £92. For carrying

out these evictions the Government have expended £1,372 in one item alone, and the object of the evictions was to turn out the tenants by a man who has since proved himself to be little short of a madman. What has been the result? We are told that it is necessary to do such things and to waste such sums of money in order to maintain law and order in Ireland. Now, let me ask the Government to consider what they have got for this £1,372. They have secured this result—that the whole of the Clanricarde Estate is in a state of revolution against the payment of rent. That which you have done at Woodford has made it impossible for Lord Clanricarde to get a shilling of rent, and he never will get a shilling until he comes down to the terms which the tenants offer so long as this system is going on. The only justification for this monstrous waste of money is that you are going to restore law and order in Ireland. Now, have you made any advance in that direction? The only result you have achieved as yet has been the turning out of four men from their houses. They have not paid the rent, and, instead of making them pay, you have induced 15,000 men to declare that they will refuse to pay their rent until these four men are put back upon their farms. I will tell the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland plainly that not one shilling of rent will be paid on the Clanricarde Estate until he puts these four men back again, and undoes the work which was done in Woodford in August last. The present system, if continued, must inevitably disgrace any Government that is prepared to carry it on. Let me take another instance, and really I think it is only fair that the Committee should see they get value for their money in any case. The second case I had something to do with myself. I refer to the Glenbeigh evictions. I am not going into the details of those evictions, because I think we have heard enough of them in this House; but I wish to point out that, according to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland himself, we are now called upon to vote a sum of £450 for the extra pay and allowances of the police who were employed in carrying out those evictions, and yet there is not a man in England, whether he be Conservative or Liberal, who is

not utterly disgusted with the manner in which those evictions were carried out. In order to evict these poor tenants, and burn their houses down, you have now to pay £450 of English money. What have you gained? Have you restored law and order? Have you conciliated the people? There was no combination in this locality against the payment of rent. The members of the Land League did pay their rent, and others paid all they were able to pay. You have spent £450 in evicting these persons, and now the whole of the tenants of the Glenbeigh Estate refuse to pay any more. Therefore, you have only succeeded in ruining the landlord. What has occurred at Ballyferreter? You have there taught them to realize the lesson you have been teaching them for the last 50 years—namely, that where they submit to the law they get no mercy, and that where they resist the law they get justice. An agent was sent down there before the police arrived on the scene, and, before Lord Cork's agent called in the police, he refused to give any better terms to the tenants than one year's rent and the costs. When the police were sent down the people met them armed with such rude weapons as they could collect. They met the police, resisted their progress, and put them to flight. The next day a British gunboat was employed to assist the police. Surely this was a spectacle for gods and men—a British gunboat employed to restore order in these country districts! What did the people do then? When the police came down they faced them as before; they assembled on the mountain, rolled down huge boulders, and the police had to fight their way. In the end the landlord had to accept the tenants' terms. That is the lesson you are teaching the people of Ireland. If they obey the law they get no mercy; but if they will fight the police, the better they fight the more they will get. That is a lesson which the Chief Secretary and the Government are teaching the people of Ireland all over the country, and it is a lesson which I have learned from my childhood upwards. As long as the people have remained quiet they have been exterminated; but when they rise and break the law, and make violent resistance, they get terms. Yet the Government have the audacity

to come forward now and ask the people of England to pay £450 for burning down the houses of the poor tenants in Glenbeigh. They are, further, asked to pay £1,500 or £2,000 for this gallant endeavour to give effect to the insanities of Lord Clanricarde. I know that the Government themselves were disgusted with the conduct of Lord Clanricarde. His own agent was so disgusted that he left him; and now you are beginning to see the consequences of refusing to alter the law at the demand of the people of Ireland. The Government are compelled at this moment to place the forces of the Crown at the disposal of a man whom they regard with the utmost abhorrence and disgust, and whom they have endeavoured vainly to control. They feel themselves called upon to place at Lord Clanricarde's disposal as many armed men as he chooses to demand, in order that they may advance into a country where the people refuse to yield, and where nothing can follow but strife. Before I leave this subject I should like to relate a circumstance which will remain in my memory as long as I live. The police who were sent down to Glenbeigh formed into column, and they marched to a remote house, four miles away on the mountain, occupied by a Mrs. Moriarty. The bâton men led the van, like a body of skirmishers; then came the police armed with their swords and rifles, with two Emergency crowbar men in the middle, and followed by the representatives of the Press and the peasantry. In that order they marched for four miles along the road-side some 200 strong, and they consumed the entire day, at a probable cost to the country of £40 or £50. And what was the result? When we got to Mrs. Moriarty's house, and the agent went in, it was discovered that this was the case of a joint holding, and that Mrs. Moriarty had offered her rent to the agent, who refused to take it. The agent refused because this woman's brother—who was a joint tenant in the holding—could not pay, and, on inquiry, they declared to me that they honestly believed he had not a shilling in the world. In this case, this body of police were marched for a considerable distance to evict a tenant who had offered payment of the rent. It was the most stupid and irritating exhibition I ever witnessed in my life. I talked to the woman, and

I said—"I wonder how people remain in this place at all." She said—"I thought I should be rich here; and so I should have been if two cows had not died on me in the summer." I do not believe for a moment that she was telling an untruth. Two of her cows had died during the summer, and she had only one left. Notwithstanding this, she had offered to pay her rent, and she had brought it in twice, and laid it on the table before the agent. Nevertheless, this large body of police was marched to her holding. She informed me that the money she had tendered in payment of the rent she had obtained from some of her children who are in service. "Oh," she said, "I cannot pay now as I used to do, because my son left me last year to go to America, and he left me in a hole. But, Sir," she added, "I cannot blame him. I have been robbing him of his wages ever since he was 15 years of age, and I have devoted every shilling to the payment of the rent." This interview with this poor woman will remain impressed on my mind as long as I live. These are the persons the police are employed to evict. Then, I would ask, are we getting the value of our money for evictions of this kind? Is there any Unionist who imagines that we are getting value, and that they will maintain the Union for another six years like those we have just passed through? You are now driving Ireland into anarchy, and there really exists no Government at all. If the Unionists in this House desire to maintain the Union, the sooner they bring in a Bill to stop evictions the better. We are now paying for the suppression of public meetings in Ireland. Meetings have been suppressed without the slightest justification even in the most disturbed times when the greatest excitement has prevailed, but which have not been stained by an act of violence or a single crime. I must confess that every Monday morning I have opened the newspapers with a feeling of dread, expecting to hear that there had been a collision between the Government and the people. I warn the Government that we shall continue to hold these meetings. I defy the Government to put them down, and if bloodshed follows, on their heads be the crime and the shame. Who is it that is breaking the law? We, who desire to give vent to our

grievances, or the Government who are endeavouring to suppress liberty of speech and the right of public meeting in Ireland? The Government proclaimed the meeting at Coolgreaney. I have here a copy of the Proclamation signed by a General Officer in Her Majesty's Army—Sir Redvers Buller. We are told that the Government proclaimed that meeting not because any information had been sworn that it was likely to lead to a breach of the peace, but because in their impression it had a tendency to promote an illegal object, and, therefore, they ought to prevent it. Talk as you may, if such a power is placed in the hands of the Executive the right of public meeting and liberty of speech will be at an end. Is it to be in the power of an Executive acting in the dark in Dublin Castle to proclaim public meetings in Ireland, *ad libitum*, on the representation of some land agent who goes up the back stairs and says that in his opinion a particular meeting which has been announced to be held is called to support the Plan of Campaign? If this kind of action is to be taken the right of free speech will be at an end in Ireland, and I tell the Government plainly that we will not tamely submit to such a course. We held our meeting last Sunday, although it was proclaimed by the Government, and the Government knew nothing of it until it had been held. We shall continue to do so, and if we are interfered with and blood is shed in consequence let that blood be on the head of the Government who attempt to suppress the right of public meeting. What happened at Coolgreaney? I mention this because it illustrates in a graphic manner the uselessness of employing the police in such a way. We have heard in this House complaint after complaint of the prevalence of undetected crime and outrage in Ireland. Why is that? It is because the police are useless. They can put down meetings in Ireland, and can bâton the people; but they cannot apprehend a murderer or put a stop to moonlighting. What was it that they tried to do at Coolgreaney? The General Officer to whom I have referred attempted to put down the Coolgreaney meeting. He declined to be humbugged, and he sent down 200 police and mounted men to scour the country. Well, what happened? We sent out

bogus cars; the police rode after them, and then we held our meeting with bands and banners and with 2,000 persons present. It was held within five miles of Coolgreaney; speeches were made at enormous length, and the police did not know a word about the meeting, nor was there any police reporter present, and no report of our speeches was supplied to the Government. Perhaps the consequence was that I gave a freer play to my imagination than I am accustomed to do. After the meeting was over, in driving along the road to Coolgreaney, I passed 200 policemen marching out of Coolgreaney under the pleasing delusion that they had dispersed the meeting. We arrived at Coolgreaney at 5 o'clock, and then we held a meeting on the very spot where it was intended to take place originally. Now, why should the people of this country be asked to pay large sums of money for such tomfoolery as this? The attempt at suppressing that meeting probably cost the country £100, and this is all you got for it. You did not suppress the meeting, and you lost the valuable report which would have been placed in the archives of Dublin Castle by the police reporter, and which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) has lost the pleasure of perusing. I am sorry for that, because I have some hopes of converting him even yet. The police found it impossible to suppress this meeting, because there was not even a child of 13 years who would not deceive them, and they could get no more information as to where we were, or what we were doing, than if they had been in France or Germany. They were driving about the country, and every child or woman they questioned sent them on a wrong road. Are these the men who are to constitute a force capable of suppressing murder? How are the Irish Constabulary to put down murder and moonlighting when things have been brought to such a pass in Ireland that it is considered a crime and an act of treachery to be seen talking to a policeman? The result of all these arrangements is, of course, that crime flourishes, and the police are hated; the Estimates grow and grow, and instead of getting any value for the money voted we only find that the

country is going from bad to worse. Surely one would suppose that for a sum of £1,400,000 a-year the Government ought to be able to maintain law and order in Ireland. But what is the fact? Hon. Members of this House declare that there is no Government in Ireland at all. A remarkable letter from a noble Lord has recently appeared in the newspapers. He tells us that the Conservative Government, when they came into Office, declared that they would put down agitation in Ireland with a turn of their little finger, and the Government were at once to restore the authority of law and order, and to put an end for ever to the operations of the Plan of Campaign. It is declared that there is no Government at all in Ireland, and you are getting no value whatever for the £1,400,000 a-year you are spending on the Irish police. Now what might happen if you allow the Irish people to manage their own police? The Irish people would "run" them—as they say in America—for £400,000, and for that money they would maintain law and order in a very different fashion from the present. Under the existing system the expenditure must continue to increase, with worse and worse results. Then there is a third expense to which I wish to draw attention—namely, the charge for the protection of police reporters in Ireland. I estimate that during the last six years between £20,000 and £30,000 have been spent in collecting reports of probably 6,000 speeches; and I think it is about time for some Minister to get up and say what purpose, under the sun, he expects to gain by collecting those vast masses of speeches, since during the whole of these six years there has never been an attempt to use the speeches except in two well-known trials—in both of which the Government were signally defeated. If the Government have given up trials, why do they send large bodies of police to protect Government reporters? I have done everything in my power, although it is not always possible to do so, when the Government very prudently and wisely consider it necessary to send a body of armed men to protect their reporters. The people regard them as spies, and they will not allow them to go upon the platform. In every instance, when I have been present, I have invited them

upon the platform when the people have allowed me to do so, because I have felt that the situation might otherwise be of a critical and dangerous character. The Government insist that these persons shall have the best place in front of the meeting. The people, however, regard them as spies, and the consequence is that they are compelled by force to thrust themselves into the middle of the meeting. I shall never forget the scene which I witnessed at Loughrea. The Government, unfortunately, on that occasion did not send a sufficient body of men. They sent down some 20 armed men; but the committee would not allow their reporter to go on the platform, even at my request. The police thereupon insisted upon forcing their way to the front. There were at least 10,000 men assembled, and just before I began to speak somebody struck a constable or shoved him, and the police were immediately called upon to fix bayonets. Now, if one drop of blood had been shed on that occasion, I believe that not one of those policemen would have left that meeting alive, notwithstanding everything I could have done to protect them. If the Government had a really strong reason they might say—"We will run the risk of bloodshed, because what we are doing is necessary." But I do not know what interests the Government have to serve in reporting these speeches. They get full reports of them in the public papers, and their only object can be to have sworn reports for the purpose of trials, of which, however, I should think the Irish Secretary has had enough. Is it good value for money to vote large sums for a purpose which is fraught with the greatest danger to peace and order and a cause of insult and irritation to the people of Ireland? There never was—and the police, I believe, will bear out the statement—at any agrarian meeting the slightest cause for the presence of the police. There is no case on record where the peace has been broken, and none, as far as I know, in which injury has been done to property. I attended a meeting some time ago, to reach which I had to drive over one of the most frightful mountain roads it was ever my lot to travel over for a distance of 20 miles. At least 10,000 people were present, and the authorities, in order to protect their police reporter, were obliged

to transport 150 police over that long mountain road at enormous cost, and with great exposure to the men, and all this for the purpose of getting a report of speeches which is never used. I have not the slightest doubt that the expenses to which the Government were put on that day alone amounted to £40. And what have you got for it? Like everything else in connection with the police, the proceedings of the authorities only tend to promote disorder and disaffection. Let the police perform their legitimate duty of detecting and punishing crime. Let them be employed to stop evictions rather than to carry them out. It is a curious thing that when I commenced this agitation last year, in company with my friend (Mr. O'Brien), we thought that under it we could reduce Ireland to order; and it is a curious fact that never in the whole history of the country have we passed through a period of such deep and wide-spread distress with such freedom from disorder and crime. At Christmas the Government commenced to suppress our meetings, and simultaneously with their action crime appeared, and there was an ebullition of lawlessness. As sure as you go on suppressing these meetings so surely will crime increase. I have myself denounced crime, and I have pointed out to the people that their condition will be a great deal better without crime. But it is not by denouncing crime that you will wean the Irish people from crime. Your first effort should be to get into the confidence of the people, and to do so you must convince them that you sympathize with their wrongs. It is not by denouncing crime, but it is by leading the people in better and more wise and more Christian roads that you can bring about an amelioration of their condition. The English people are denouncing crime. They have been doing so for 100 years, and what have they achieved? Nothing at all. You have tried suppression and denunciation of crime, and you have accomplished nothing. A good deal has been said about Boycotting. Well, perhaps I may be permitted to retain the conviction I have long since expressed, that if it comes to be a choice between murder and Boycotting, I prefer Boycotting. That is all I will state about Boycotting. If the Government are determined to pursue their present policy, and imagine that they

are going to pacify Ireland and restore law and order by piling up the Police Estimates, they will have to make up their minds for a largely increased expenditure for the purpose. I am told that they have been keeping two constables parading every railway station in Ireland from morning to night, doing nothing except peeping into the railway carriages, in order to ascertain if I was there. I suppose there are not less than 1,000 policemen in Ireland at the present moment who have no business on earth except to peep into every railway train in order to see whether Mr. O'Brien or myself is travelling by it. I warn the Government that it is not by a Crimes' Act or the Constabulary Vote that they will manage to extract rents from the estates which have struck under the Plan of Campaign until you meet the people fairly.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) has spoken, as he always does, with earnestness and ability. I have on this occasion to ask the indulgence of the House, because I am unfortunately suffering from illness; but I will do the best I can to answer the hon. Member, and I do not think my task will be a difficult one. Now, Sir, the hon. Member has commented upon the great cost of the Irish Constabulary, and he has asked us if we suppose that we will restore law and order in Ireland by merely piling up the Constabulary Estimates. The cost of the Constabulary is, I admit, very great; but that cost is a necessary element in the maintenance of law and order in Ireland. [*Cries of "No!"*] Yes, if law and order are to be maintained according to the modern standard of law and order, and not that standard which the hon. Member has thought fit to follow. But I quite admit that the hon. Member is right in supposing that we do not for a moment conceal our opinion that it is not merely by piling up the Constabulary Estimates that we can maintain law and order. That law and order is not maintained, at the present moment, as we wish; and the hon. Member knows—and the House knows—that as soon as we possibly can we shall apply for greater powers to enable it to be properly maintained. The hon. Member objects to this Vote for extra

pay and allowances to the Constabulary by reason, as he says, that they have been incurred in respect of three heads—evictions, the suppression of public meetings, and the protection of police reporters. Sir, in the first place the hon. Member is absolutely incorrect in that statement. By far the greater part of the Vote—something like £20,000 in all—is due to the necessity for dealing by movements of the police with a matter which even the hon. Member and his Friends will admit it was necessary for the Government to deal—namely, the unfortunate riots in Belfast, and other disturbances at Parliamentary elections which occurred at the same time. There is, of course, a margin due to the causes to which the hon. Member refers, because in presenting these Estimates it was necessary to include every item of expenditure. The hon. Member charges us with the unnecessary use of the Police in maintaining the law on the occasion of evictions. Well, Sir, why was that necessary? For what reason, except for the agitation and the incitements used by the hon. Member and his Friends to the tenants not to pay their rents, who would otherwise have paid their rents, and to people to assemble in crowds to obstruct the execution of the law, who would not otherwise have thought of assembling. But for these reasons these things would not have happened. Every effort has been used by the hon. Member and his Friends to stir the people of Ireland to resistance to the law, and to obstruct the authorities in the execution of the law. The hon. Member has said—and his remark was cheered by some hon. Members opposite—that the events which occurred at the evictions are our fault, because we declined to alter the law. Then he went on to refer to a case which conclusively proves that his own argument is incorrect. What did he tell us with respect to Lord Clanricarde and the evictions at Woodford in the autumn? Did he tell us that the great cause of these evictions was the inability of the tenants to pay their rents? No, Sir; he made no such assertion. Did he tell us that when no rent was paid on that property it was due to the inability of the tenant to pay it? Not for a moment; but he did tell us that the refusal to pay rent was due to the disposition on the part of the tenants, which, I say, was fostered

and encouraged, if not initiated, by the hon. Member himself and his Friends, to resist the payment of rent until certain evicted tenants were restored to their holdings. What would the passing of the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) last Session have done for such a case as that? Does the hon. Member mean to tell the House that if that Bill had been passed he would have desisted from advising the tenants who could pay their rents not to pay them? I thought we were asked to pass that Bill to relieve those who were unable to pay.

MR. DILLON: What I said was, that I did not advise tenants to pay who were unable to pay without ruinously depriving themselves of what they required as the means of working their farms.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I think the hon. Member is not absolutely accurate in his recollection. I very much wish it were possible for hon. Members of this House to inquire carefully into this particular case at Woodford, for it cannot have been true to say of the tenants on that property to whom the hon. Members have referred that they were in that position. Beyond that it has never been alleged that these four persons, in whose evictions so large a sum was expended, declined to settle with the landlord, or his agent, because of their inability to pay. It was solely on account of a combination to set the law at defiance in that part of Ireland. I am bound to admit that the combination has brought that part of Ireland into a condition which is a disgrace to the civilization of the United Kingdom. The hon. Member refers to the large sum of £1,200 which is included in the Estimate for police protection on that occasion in respect of the Woodford Estate. That sum appears to me to be exorbitant to the last degree. The matter happened a few days after the assumption of Office by the present Government, and one of the first things I did was to inquire into the circumstances under which this large expenditure had been incurred, and to take steps which, I feel sure, will reduce similar expenditure in the future; but whatever expenditure has been incurred in such matters must be incurred rather than that the law should be defied. The hon. Member has also referred to the case of the

Glenbeigh Estate, and also to the case of the Ballyferreter tenants; and anyone who has read or studied the statements which have been published with reference to the condition of the tenants on the Glenbeigh Estate—and that, unfortunately, is the condition of many tenants in that part of Ireland—would suppose that those evictions would have been stopped, or even delayed, by the passing of the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. This question has already been discussed pretty fully in the House this Session, and I think it has been conclusively shown that such a supposition is altogether unfounded. I have again to say that the contention of the hon. Member that all this expenditure is due to the refusal of the House to alter the law as proposed by the hon. Member for Cork is absolutely baseless. Of course, I should not be in Order in discussing that proposal now; but I may say that if it had been adopted it would have put money into the hands of many men in Ireland who were able to pay their full rents to their landlords, and many of whom have since paid them, as the tenants in England and Scotland have done. The hon. Member went on to the second head of his indictment—the suppression of public meetings. The hon. Member charged us with having broken the law in order to suppress freedom of speech. According to the argument of the hon. Member, the Committee might be led to suppose that it is an every-day thing for Her Majesty's Government to prohibit public meetings in Ireland. [An hon. MEMBER: So it is.] Now, how many meetings does the House suppose have been actually prohibited during the last four months? Just eight only, four of which were on Sunday. That is a specimen of the facts from Ireland that are adduced here. We have not proclaimed meetings *ad libitum*. We do not claim, and we never have claimed, to possess any right whatever, as suggested below the Gangway, to put a stop to public meetings in Ireland. But we know very well that, as the law stands, we are bound to see whether there is anything about the meeting, either in its object or in its probable effect, which will justify the Government in taking special measures with regard to it. Now, Sir, what are the facts with regard to these meetings? The first meeting prohibited was one called at Sligo directly

for the purpose of intimidating jurors in a forthcoming trial. That meeting was prevented; but Mr. O'Brien visited Sligo, and pursued a course which he has followed on other occasions. It has been a favourite pastime with the hon. Gentleman and some of his Friends, when a meeting has been prohibited, to make excursions, sometimes in cars, sometimes on horseback, sometimes by train, and sometimes aquatic excursions, in order to hold meetings, not in the places where they have been prohibited, but wherever they can get a score of people on whom they may come unexpectedly, and to whom they address themselves in the absence of the police; and these meetings are, more or less, accurately reported in the Press the next day. With regard to the case of Sligo, I remember seeing a glowing account in *The Freeman's Journal* of the way in which the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant had been evaded, and it might be supposed that everything which was prohibited had been done. The fact was that Mr. O'Brien and one or two others slipped out of the back-yard in the middle of the night and drove on a car a distance of 15 miles, and then, getting a few persons together next morning, they delivered certain speeches which were more or less accurately reported on the following day. Another meeting was prohibited which was called ostensibly for the same object—the intimidation of jurors. The meeting supposed to be held was, I believe, a bogus meeting; no attempt was ever made to hold it. Two other meetings were prohibited—one at Loughrea and the other at Rosslea. Both of those meetings were called a day or two before the time which the Sheriff had fixed to carry out certain evictions. Informations were sworn that if those meetings were held the result would certainly be incitement to resistance to the execution of the law. That, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, was a sufficient reason for the prohibition of the meeting. Another of these meetings did take place, like the meeting at Sligo, by the hon. Member and his Friends holding it in some unexpected place; but none has been held in the place where it had been proclaimed. Other meetings have been summoned—like that at Coolgreaney, to which the hon. Member has referred—by a placard giving the information that it

was intended to hold a meeting to promote the Irish National cause. Well, Sir, the Irish National cause may be promoted in various ways, according to the views of hon. Members who call themselves the Irish National Party. It has been promoted in past times by weapons which I do not for a moment charge hon. Members opposite with using, but which have been very vividly portrayed in this House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). It has been promoted by misguided men by means of dynamite, assassination, and things of that kind. It has also been attempted to be promoted by Constitutional agitation such as that used by the late Mr. Butt, and against which I have not a word to say. Nor would I have any word to say against hon. Members below the Gangway opposite if all their agitation had been Constitutional agitation. Again, it has been attempted to be promoted by the Plan of Campaign, or, in other words, by an organized system of robbery.

MR. DILLON: Mr. Courtney, inasmuch as I am one of those who conducted the Plan of Campaign, I ask you whether the right hon. Baronet is in Order in alluding to it as an organized system of robbery?

THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Baronet has not imputed to the hon. Member that he has organized robbery.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I am surprised at the interruption of the hon. Member, because I understand that a jury in Dublin recently disagreed in a certain case that was before it, some of the members of that jury having declined to believe the hon. Member's own statement that he was concerned in the Plan of Campaign. Sir, that is my description of the Plan of Campaign, whoever may have been concerned in it, and I am bound to say that when the Plan of Campaign has been adopted on an estate the Government have a very difficult task before them in deciding on the course to pursue with reference to meetings called on that estate for the promotion of the Plan of Campaign. Now, what was the case in reference to the Coolgreaney meeting? There was an estate of no large extent where there was no pretence that the rents were exorbitant; where the relations of landlord and tenant had been excellent for

years, and were admitted to be so on the part of those who spoke on behalf of the tenants themselves. The landlord not long ago appointed an agent who was obnoxious to the hon. Member and his Friends. The Plan of Campaign was consequently adopted on that estate; the tenants declined to pay their rents, except on a certain reduction fixed by themselves; auctions of their stock were held, and all the means of the Plan of Campaign for defeating the just rights of the landlord were adopted, and then last Sunday a meeting was held, nominally to promote the National cause in Ireland, but really to force the tenants to adhere to the Plan of Campaign. I was asked a Question to-day upon the subject, and I think some hon. Members received with doubt my statement as to forcing the tenants to adhere to the Plan of Campaign. I should be very sorry to attach too much credence to anything that may appear in the newspapers on this subject; but I did see a statement in a newspaper that in the course of certain evictions, as to which I was asked a Question this evening, on that estate the wife of one of the tenants actually had a purse in her hand, which she held out to the agent, offering him the rent; but the local priest, who took a leading part in promoting the Plan of Campaign, pulled the purse out of her hand, and prevented her from paying her rent. This meeting was called last Sunday for forcing the Plan of Campaign upon those tenants. It was called at a time when evictions were pending on that property. It was, in the opinion of the Government—an opinion based on sworn information—calculated to lead to resistance to the enforcement of the law. The Government proclaimed the meeting. Again, the hon. Member and his Friends, by the system I have described, of driving about the country to places four, five, and eight miles off, contrived to address a few small assemblies. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Yes; and of course Members present at the meetings were greatly exaggerated the next day. The hon. Member stated that a meeting was held at Coolgreaney. That was not so.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): The right hon. Gentleman must excuse me. I was present and spoke at that meeting.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : That was not so.

MR. J. E. REDMOND : I rise to Order, Mr. Courtney.

THE CHAIRMAN : Order, order ! Sir Michael Hicks-Beach will explain.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : I do not mean to question the word of the hon. Member; but what happened was this. A platform had been erected in a certain part of the town, where a meeting was announced to be held. No meeting was held there; but in the evening a few persons—among them, possibly, the hon. Member—did attempt to make speeches in another part of the town.

MR. J. E. REDMOND : It was in the centre of the town.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : But they were at once dispersed by the police; and that was the result of the Coolgreaney meeting. Sir, I do not mean to say, or for a moment to ask the Committee to consider, that the state of affairs which I have described is a satisfactory state of affairs; very much the contrary. All I have to say with regard to it is this—that believing, as we do, that the meetings to which I have alluded, and which, I may again remind the Committee, have only, in all, been eight in number, were held for purposes that would lead to breaches of the law, we deemed it our duty to prohibit their being held, and to do our best to enforce that prohibition. The hon. Member says that we have failed in this matter. Well, Sir, I admit that if we had powers which would enable us, not to interfere so much with those meetings, but to bring to justice the persons who use meetings of this kind to incite people to breaches of the law, then we should deal with the matter more efficiently than we are at present able to do. The hon. Member says—"Give us the police, and we will maintain law and order in Ireland at a cost of £400,000, instead of £1,350,000." How will they maintain law and order? [An hon. MEMBER: By putting a stop to jury packing.] Will they do it by abolishing property in Ireland? It is our duty, and the duty of any Government in this country, to maintain law and order in Ireland as it has always been interpreted in this House of Commons; and when the hon. Member asks me, in the third count of his indictment, why we sent police to protect the Government reporters at

these meetings that were held, and why those reporters are sent, I will tell him that it is—as he has himself admitted to have some tangible evidence of the speeches made on those occasions—in order to use that evidence for the purpose of prosecution if required. The hon. Member says—"What is the good of this? You will never be able to get a conviction." But, Sir, we intend to ask this House to make such changes in the law as will make it possible to get a conviction where an offence has been committed. [*Cries of "Right or Wrong!"*] No; not right or wrong. I will venture to say that anybody who watches the course of the Assizes at present going on in Ireland—anybody who watches them fairly, who sees the way in which, from day to day, courses involving no political issues, courses involving nothing but ordinary crime, are dealt with by juries in more than one county in Ireland—will be bound to admit, if he considers it fairly, that a change in the law is not required to secure a conviction, whether right or wrong, but that a change is required to secure that justice shall be done. I am afraid I cannot ask the Committee to listen to me longer. I have said that I am speaking under very great difficulties. I only wish, in conclusion, to protest as strongly as I can against the doctrine of resistance to the law, which has been preached to-night by the hon. Member—"If you will not alter the law as we choose, then we will not obey it." That is the doctrine which the hon. Member has preached in this House to-night.

MR. DILLON : I rise to say, Sir, that I preached no such doctrine. I said that if the Government break the law in prohibiting public meetings, we will hold the meetings in spite of them.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : Then the hon. Member says the Government have broken the law; but he has made no attempt whatever to prove that. That was attempted to be proved in the Debate upon the Address, initiated by the hon. Member for Cork; but the House declined, by a large majority, to accept the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman sitting on the Front Opposition Bench; and those sitting behind them, although they supported the Amendment, never charged the Government with having broken the law. If the hon. Member and his

Friends think that we have broken the law, let them bring this matter before the House, and specify how and where and in what manner we have done so. I maintain that we have, in fact, been careful to avoid straining it, and have never interfered with a public meeting except where there was something illegal in its purpose or in its objects, or when there was reason to apprehend a breach of the law. Again, I say if the speech of the hon. Member is not an incitement to resist the law, if it be not altered as he may desire it, then I do not know what principle underlies it, or what its effect may be on the country. I leave it to the judgment of this House and of the country. I believe it is only an additional proof of the absolute necessity which exists that, if order is to be restored in Ireland, further powers must be conferred upon the Executive.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), in the concluding observations he addressed to the House, has given to his followers and the country at large an assurance that at all events, if it be possible, he will without delay recur to the policy with which we are already very familiar in Ireland. It is quite evident, from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, that to such an extent as he can obtain powers from this House he is determined to make it hot for the Irish Party in future. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman, however, that with the granting of powers to him by this House his difficulties will by no means cease. He is going to enter upon a policy which has been tried before and has failed; and I can tell him that no Predecessor of his occupying the position of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant ever yet engaged in the task with less cause to cry out than the right hon. Gentleman himself. I should have thought that with the knowledge he has of the country and the information he relies on as part and parcel of that knowledge, and which he has obtained from the police in regard to the suppression of public meetings in Ireland, he must have been aware that he was in no degree superior to those of his Predecessors who have tried the same policy and have failed in their endeavours to carry it out. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the Plan of

Campaign as "organized robbery." I should like to know how the right hon. Gentleman would wish us to apply the same term to the policy which he himself has been carrying out in Ireland during the last three or four months? What is the difference in the Plan of Campaign as it affects the landlords and the policy of pressure—always, of course, within the law—which the right hon. Gentleman has been actively carrying out with the assistance of his subordinates in the Irish Office. Many instances might be cited of the pressure which has been brought to bear upon the landlords. Captain Plunkett, one of the subordinates of the right hon. Gentleman, frankly confesses that he has brought such pressure to bear even in cases where he was wholly unacquainted with the circumstances of the tenant and the justice of the landlord's demand. Surely that is a policy to which this expression of "organized robbery" may be applied with much more force and truth than anything that has been carried out in the Plan of Campaign. The right hon. Gentleman has wasted a good deal of the time of the House in an endeavour to show that the difficulties in Glenbeigh would not have been met by the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). But what would have been met by it if that Bill had been accepted is this—the Plan of Campaign would have been unnecessary, and all the difficulties for which the right hon. Gentleman appeals to the House to extend him their sympathy, all the troubles which have occurred, and all this useless expenditure of public money would have been obviated. I maintain that it would have been much wiser, even to the Irish landlords themselves, to have accepted the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork than to bring the unfortunate pressure of the Government to bear upon them and bring about the Plan of Campaign. I do not admit the right of the right hon. Gentleman to lecture us as to our policy. I say that we admire good laws as much as he does, much as he desires to see the law maintained and respected; but it is our interest and that of the people we represent to see that the law is just and equitable. We do not complain that Her Majesty's Government should call in the assistance of the police in carrying out evictions in Ireland if their only desire is to use them for the

prevention of disturbance, where disturbances are likely to take place; but what we do complain of is that the Government maintain in Ireland at an enormous expense a police force which is practically an army of occupation, and that they maintain it for the single purpose only of protecting the landlords in their unjust exactions upon the Irish tenants. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the case of the evicted tenants on the estate of Lord Clanricarde at Woodford, and he has said that since resistance was organized the whole of that district of country has become lawless. Now, long before there was this resistance in Woodford the district was in a state of lawlessness and disorder far greater than that which has characterized it since. Long before the Plan of Campaign was thought of lawlessness was created by Lord Clanricarde, who has never seen one of his tenants, who has refused them a site for a church or a school, and who has steadily refused to extend to them a hand of sympathy. I must congratulate Her Majesty's Government that it was to enforce the rights of Lord Clanricarde that they first exercised the powers they were invested with when they took charge of the Government of Ireland. I think we have a right to complain that all this expenditure of the public money should have been had recourse to by the Government solely for the purpose of assisting the Irish landlords in carrying out their unjust exactions upon the Irish tenants. The right hon. Gentleman has admitted that in order to evict four families on the estate of Lord Clanricarde it has cost the country a sum of £1,372. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary confessed in his Bristol speech that he was doing all he could to bring pressure—of course within the law—but, nevertheless, to bring pressure to bear upon the Irish landlords; but the very moment the same kind of pressure is brought to bear upon them by those who have much greater interests in the country than he can have, he has nothing for them but prosecution and imprisonment. Recently the Government made the most shameful effort ever made by an Irish Government to pack a jury, and to place in the box those who were the sworn enemies of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), whom it

was my high privilege to defend on his trial; the Government in the most shameful manner pressed these men into the box, and endeavoured to extort from them a verdict of guilty against my hon. Friend. The right hon. Gentleman, so far from being ashamed of that policy or regretting it in the least degree, has the coolness to stand up in this House this evening and defend it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The remarks of the hon. Member are altogether out of Order. He must connect his observations with the Vote for the Irish Constabulary.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: I was merely endeavouring to reply to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman. However, I will obey your ruling, and I will not pursue that line of argument further. Now, Sir, it is not with the employment of the police for the maintenance of law and order in Ireland that we have any fault to find. It is not for the just exercise of any powers conferred on the Irish Executive that we have any quarrel whatsoever. What we complain of is this—that the whole system of police and the whole of the jury system in Ireland is administered for one class and one interest, to the detriment of every other class and interest. No doubt we have had decisions of Judges in Ireland in support of the system, and frequent imprisonments for contempt of Court; but the whole policy of the Irish Executive has been to bolster up this one class and interest, even at the risk of sacrificing the lives of the unfortunate people. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the evictions at Glenbeigh. With the history of those evictions the House is familiar. No doubt the Sheriff had a right to demand all the assistance that was necessary to enable him to discharge his duty; but what I complain of is that the Irish Constabulary should have been placed at his disposal for the purpose of enabling him to level and burn down the houses of the Irish peasantry. How can you expect the people of Ireland to respect the law so long as the officers of the law are employed and paid for such purposes as that? The right hon. Gentleman has said that during the recent agitation all the meetings that were suppressed in four months were only eight. I fail to see why the right

hon. Gentleman should take a period of four months. What we complain of is that the Government, not during a period of four months, but now, are entering on a policy of the indiscriminate suppression of public meetings, and that a mere suspicion in the mind of an official of Dublin Castle, who possesses no acquaintance with the locality concerned, that a meeting may be used for an unlawful purpose is quite sufficient to deprive the people of their right of public meeting. If the police reporters are as useful a machinery as the right hon. Gentleman thinks they are, would it not be better to allow the meetings to go on, to assure himself that they were used for promoting illegal objects and purposes, and then to put the law in force. With regard to the meeting at Sligo, I observed that the right hon. Gentleman carefully passed over altogether the suppression of that meeting. There was a Proclamation by the authorities prohibiting a meeting which was proposed to be held on a Sunday. At night some of the townspeople convened a meeting within doors, and as the people were entering they were set upon by the police and knocked down with bâtons. We deny that the meeting at Sligo was convened for the purpose of intimidating the jurors; but we assert that it was called for the purpose of protesting against a packed jury panel. The Chief Secretary has threatened us with coercion. That threat has no terror for me. It is our duty to protect the rights of the people, and we shall continue, within the law if we can, but without the law if necessary, to maintain those rights.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has said that he will do all he can to preserve law and order in Ireland according to his standard. That is, I suppose, according to the English standard. There is a different standard among us in Ireland, because we believe that law and order can be in the truest sense maintained in Ireland by abolishing the system of landlordism which has been so great a disgrace to the country. I believe we are satisfied that law and order can never be permanently secured in Ireland by any other means; and our conception of law and order is, I think, infinitely higher, truer, and deeper than

that of the right hon. Gentleman. It is rather to be regretted that we have not all the particulars of this Vote set down in the Estimates. Why should we not have exactly, in black and white, how much money has been spent in suppressing meetings; how much in putting down riots; and how much more in election disturbances. Why have we not the items clearly given under the various sub-heads. I think it is most objectionable and most unreasonable that the Committee should be asked to vote a sum of £30,000, with no specific account of the purposes to which the money has been applied. Then, again, the right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the presence of police reporters at public meetings. In going about England I have found no argument more potent in showing the difference in the way in which we are governed in Ireland, and the way in which you are governed in England, than the mere mention of the facts connected with the Government reporters, and by drawing attention to the circumstance that the Constabulary are employed in force to guard them, with the sole object of enabling the Government to pounce down on hon. Members of this House afterwards, and prosecuting them for the words they may use. Such a fact as that is a sufficient proof of the disgraceful way in which the people of Ireland are governed. I have sometimes thought it might be the duty of the Representatives of Irish constituencies to protest solemnly, openly and publicly, at such meetings against this system, whatever the consequences might be. I am sure they would be supported by the mass of the people of this country, who would never tolerate, for a day, the system which has been adopted in Ireland. Then, again, in regard to the suppression of meetings, the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) has pointed out the misleading character of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman on that point. The right hon. Gentleman has said that only eight meetings have been suppressed in four months. That may be so; but our complaint is this. At the beginning of the four months the Government themselves were bringing pressure—within the law—to bear upon the landlords, and therefore they were not likely to suppress any public meetings. Our objection is that meetings are now

being suppressed, and that a different policy altogether is being pursued. It is no answer to our complaint to tell us that only eight meetings have been suppressed in four months. The right hon. Gentleman threatens us with what he intends to do when an alteration of the law, which he hopes to make, shall have been brought about. I am glad that the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) has brought out the right hon. Gentleman's purpose in its true character. We now know that, if he can effect it, trial by jury in Ireland is to be abolished. We know what he has foreshadowed; but I think he has very much mistaken the character of those who have been engaged in this agitation, and who have devoted their days and nights to an effort to defend the rights of the Irish tenants from the exactions of cruel landlords. They have not been afraid to face imprisonment, and they would face it again to-morrow if they believed it to be necessary for the protection of the poor people who have been entrusted to their care. The right hon. Gentleman is very much mistaken, and curiously misreads history, if he thinks that anything he can do will terrorize my hon. Friends. They will continue to go on as they have done. There is only one thing the Government can do which would change all this, and restore order, peace, and goodwill in Ireland, and that is, not a policy of oppression, but a policy of conciliation. Adopt a policy of conciliation, and all this expenditure for extra pay and allowances to the police, so far as it is used in suppressing public meetings, employing Government reporters, and attempting to crush popular movements in Ireland, will be absolutely unnecessary and will cease. The result of all this will be certain. The Irish people are determined to be free. They are determined to associate freedom of speech and action, and should the attempts to suppress it for a time be successful, there will always arise a new set of politicians from the ashes of the present to continue the struggle as long as it may be necessary to secure the independence and self-government of Ireland.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): I have been much surprised to hear it said to-night that the first duty of Government was the protection of the rights of

property, and I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland must have read his political economy backwards; because I have always understood that the first duty of Government is the protection of the rights and lives of the people. My hon. Friend the Member for one of the Divisions of Mayo (Mr. Dillon) took part in the defence of the people, because the Government are wielding the rights of the Crown against the people. We are not sent here to protect the rights of the Crown; we are sent to this House to protect the rights of the people. The Crown may pass away, but the rights of the people stand for ever; the rights of the people and the lives of the people cannot be dissociated. This Constabulary Force is only kept up for the purpose of maintaining the rights of property, as it is called; in Ireland it is maintained for the assistance of the landlords, but the burden of it is thrown upon the occupiers. You say that these latter have no stake in the country; but if a man has no stake in the country he has no property to defend, and he ought not to be called upon to support this Police Force. I understand that the people of England pay half the cost of the police in Ireland. [An hon. MEMBER: The whole.] If they pay the whole, so much the worse for them. I am glad to hear that, however, because the Police Force is not for the benefit of the people of Ireland. It is not subject to any municipal authority. As I understand, the Lord Mayor of Dublin has not the power to remove a single policeman who might refuse to obey his orders. I say that the people of Ireland should have control of the force for the preservation of order, and it is because they have not that power that in Ireland so much disorder exists. To speak of men armed with rifles and swords as a civil force is a waste of words; it is a military force, and we do not require it. In London I have never seen a policeman with a sword at his side and a bayonet in his hand; but you will, in Ireland, see two policemen armed with rifles and bayonets at the side of every man who is sent to prison; and it is the same in the case of women; the police have their 20 rounds of ammunition, rifle, swords, and bayonets. As I have said, although the people of England are good enough to pay for this Police Force, we are willing

to pay for a Police Force ourselves; but it must be a civil and not a military force.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that it is not in Order to discuss the general question of police in Ireland. The hon. Member must confine himself to the specific items under discussion.

MR. BLANE: This Vote of £30,000 includes travelling expenses and other charges connected with matters that have recently come under our notice in Ireland. As one who has taken some part in this movement, I am able to say that those who were associated with me have given as little cause for these extra police as possible. The sum expended in my district was altogether unnecessary; if the authorities at the Castle move their rifles and bayonets from one part of Ireland to another, I must say that I have no connection with it. We have no control over the Police Force, and therefore I contend that we ought not to be called upon to pay for this.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is again entering on the general question, and it is my duty to tell him that he is out of Order in so doing.

MR. BLANE: We have here, in addition to the original Estimate, the sum of £11,160 asked for. I say that this sum would be altogether unnecessary if the police in Ireland were subject to municipal authority, and if the statements of the Representatives of the people in this House received the attention which they deserve from the Ministers of the Crown. We submit that this Vote is altogether unnecessary, inasmuch as the vast number of Constabulary men taken from one place to another in Ireland would not be required if the control of the force were in the hands of the municipalities. It is so in this country, and in all civilized countries; but it is not so in Ireland, because the Police Force there is used against the people, and they ought not to be called on to pay for it. I thank the Committee for the patience with which they have listened to the observations which I have felt it my duty to make on this Vote.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I should not have taken part in this discussion, but for an extraordinary remark of the hon. Member who has just sat down. He informed the House that the English people

bear the whole cost of the Constabulary in Ireland. I would remind the Committee that the question has been before this House of the Limerick Corporation refusing to pay the sum at which they have been assessed on this account.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is out of Order in referring to that circumstance in connection with the Vote before the Committee.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I think it is unfair on the part of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Blane) to say that the police in Ireland are used simply and solely for the protection of the rich in Ireland and the rights of property. The Constabulary in Ireland, during the last six years, have had very serious and laborious work to do in protecting the lives, not only of landlords, but of the tenant farmers who have been subject to the direst persecution. For all that, they have not been able to protect the lives of such unfortunate men as we read were the other day shot at and left bleeding to death.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is pursuing a general argument not proper to the Question before the Committee. He must confine his remarks to the specific Question of the Vote and the subjects connected with it.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I apologize, Mr. Courtney, for straying from the immediate Question, and will say no more than that it is unfair to allege that the police in Ireland have been employed solely for the protection of landlords in Ireland.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.): This Vote is not, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite asserts, intended to pay for the protection of the lives of the humbler class, but for the carrying out of evictions and putting down meetings, and these expenses would not be necessary if the landlords had fixed the rents at a reasonable rate. I say that it is not fair that the people of England and Ireland should have to pay an extra sum for police in order to enable landlords to impose rents which the Commissioners have declared to be 60 per cent above what they ought to be; and I do not think it is a fair representation to say that the police to any great extent are required to protect the lives of tenant farmers in Ireland.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine his observations to the sum asked for, and the objects for which it is required.

MR. HAYDEN: I was under the impression that this sum was asked for the extra expense of police attending meetings in Ireland. I regret that I have been out of Order, and shall not, of course, continue my remarks any further than to repeat my belief that if the landlords had treated their tenants fairly, this extra sum for police would not have been required.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): While the hon. Member who introduced this Motion was speaking, I made a calculation with reference to the work of the police in Ireland. I find that, allowing to the Sheriff 250 working days in the year, you have, according to the Vote presented to-night, 1,150 policemen in Ireland continually engaged in the work of these evictions. These men get 3*s.* 6*d.* a day for extra work in connection with evictions and riots. What is the duty of these policemen? I was born in Ireland, and I have had reason frequently to watch with interest some of the actions and evolutions of Irish policemen. Their work has been justly described, in ordinary times, as "just getting the lime of the barrack wall on their coats and going in to brush it off again." That is the ordinary employment of a policeman in Ireland. You maintain him in idleness, and when you put upon him a duty which is to him ordinary recreative exercise you pay him 3*s.* 6*d.* extra a-day. More than that, you provide cars for them when they go to evictions. Why, Sir, it is jollity to them to go to evictions. I have been to many such scenes, and what have I seen? I have seen these policemen in long cars, and have heard them, when coming back from an eviction, singing in chorus, "Wait till the clouds roll by." It seems to me that these policemen were, in a great measure, carrying out the spirited policy of Her Majesty's Government, who are going on with a discussion in this House which will be of no value, and who apparently are waiting until the clouds pass over. It is to me absurd to have in Ireland a force which exists only for the special purpose of this work. I say it is manifestly unfair that you should give them

3*s.* 6*d.* a-day and their expenses besides. The police do not perform a single civil work in Ireland, except this work of collecting rents for the landlords. Will any hon. Gentleman who has visited Ireland during the last few months, while this charge has been accumulating, say that in a single instance he has seen policemen performing the ordinary functions which a policeman in England performs? No; the proper work of the police is neglected in Ireland, and we are told that the police are there because the rights of property must be maintained. You should lay the venue properly, and say where the rights of property really lie. Let it not be the property of a dominant faction, but let it be the property of the people, and then I will say let the rights of property be maintained. It may interest this House very much, and particularly hon. Members opposite, who will, of course, vote against any reduction of this Vote which may be moved on these Benches, to know what sort of duties the police in Ireland have been performing for the last two months which have occasioned this Vote. I saw this duty myself; I saw it being performed about a month ago. I went into the Glenbeigh district when the evictions were being carried out there; I went into that lonely and barren valley, where the people were being evicted from the homes which their families had occupied for generations; I saw the smoke curling and rising from that valley. On that day there were five cabins of the evicted people of the district smouldering, and 135 policemen paid by the taxation of the nation—paid by that mysterious person called the British taxpayer, who is so generous to us—135 policemen were present to protect the man who was burning the roof-trees of the people over their heads. You quarrel with our words in this House; but with these naked walls and these figures before us, it is hard to speak calmly of the grievances of our people. I should not object when an officer of the law, who is sent on a mission of the law, is protected by police, and even, if necessary, by a military force; I should not object to the Sheriff having a force of policemen, and I should not object to their being paid extra wages, or to the extra expense of cars for their conveyance; but I do object that the work of the Sheriff,

which is done at the expense of the nation—at the expense of the British people, who are not aware of what it is—should be prolonged for three weeks, in order that it may furnish a hideous spectacle to a disgusted world. [*Laughter.*] I do not envy the feelings of the man who can laugh at the scenes I have feebly depicted. I shall now give a further instance of the misuse of the police force in Ireland, and I shall use it to back up our appeal for the reduction of this Vote. At one of the first evictions, I wanted to test the question as to whether or not the police force were present to protect the officers of the law in their duty; I approached the Resident Magistrate, and drew attention to the facts; I said—“That old man is evicted; his widowed daughter and grandchild are out; the law has been enforced, the Sheriff has done his work, and will you take the responsibility of keeping that large force of police idle here, while merely the vindictiveness of the land agent is carried out?” In a few courteous words I was told to mind my own business. He told me that, not because it was a pleasure to him, for he was as disgusted with the work as I was; he was disgusted that a Resident Magistrate, with two officers of Constabulary and 135 men, should stand there till the cabin which had held this old man of 85, his widowed daughter and grandchild, and which had sheltered three generations of his family, was in ruins, in order to satisfy this craving for the respect of law and order in Ireland. The Sheriff was disgusted with this work, and, when he had concluded it, he insisted on going home; but the work of the land agent had not been completed. There were 135 policemen there; yet, when the Sheriff asked for a force to protect him on his way home, he could not get it. Ostensibly, you bring out the police force to protect the Sheriff; but here is the test of that profession, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary can examine it, and ascertain the truth in the matter. The Sheriff asked for a police force to protect him on his way home; he could not get that force. He put the question to the test, and walked off on his way home. What happened? Only four policemen were sent to protect him, but 135 men were retained to protect the vindictive agent; and when the Sheriff was a few fields

off, the danger of letting him go away thus was seen, and one of the Constabulary officers, who probably got 10s. 6d. a-day extra, whistles to his men, orders them to stand, and, to my own knowledge, the Sheriff was kept practically under arrest until the agent had completed his work. Is not that a misuse of the money which this House is voting away for extra police in Ireland? It was recently laid down by high authority that that officer carries Her Majesty's commands, and, therefore, he should be protected. In this case the Sheriff, who carried the decrees of Her Majesty's Court, and who was in that glen Her Majesty's representative, was allowed to go away with an insufficient force for his protection; and then practically detained under arrest, and made to act the subaltern part to a man who was only carrying out private vengeance. This is a misuse of the money we are asked to vote to-night; nay, more, I really believe that if, as I think we might reasonably claim and expect that English Members would, at least, sit in this House and hear what we have to say, and weigh our words thoroughly in their minds, as they weigh the words uttered on every other subject but this one of the government of Ireland—if the people of England could hear what we say, I believe that not one penny of this Vote would ever be passed by this Parliament. Now, Sir, there is more to complain of; the police in Ireland are taught that their jolliest and gayest time is the time of the misery and the trouble and the travail of our people. For what is called eviction duty an Irish policeman, as I have said, gets 3s. 6d. a-day extra. As there is no danger to his life or limb, will anyone tell me that the 135 men of stalwart build were in any danger in that glen? I doubt that there were as many men, women, and children there as policemen. Naturally enough, the constable that is called to eviction duty looks forward to it with joyful anticipation. I was at an eviction in the county of Limerick, within the last few months, and saw one constable getting 3s. 6d. for the amusement of evicting his own father. Such is the way in which you misuse the force, demoralize what would be a noble force and a credit to the country, if you utilized them properly. Such is the way in which you misuse the force, that the men look with

joyous anticipations to evictions, and to any other disturbances. They incur no danger; but they get a day's outing, all expenses paid, and 3s. 6d. a-day for pocket money. Now, Sir, this sort of training for the police begets only a feeling that might naturally be supposed to be begat in human beings; because even the Irish police are human. I was a witness of a disgraceful exhibition of bravery on the part of these Irish policemen to whom we are expected to pay 3s. 6d. a-day for their work in Glenbeigh. For three weeks these policemen were maintained there; for three weeks they were engaged upon work which I maintain could have been carried out by the Sheriff in two days, at a commensurately less expense, if you would not associate with it the work of the vindictive policy for which you—Her Majesty's Government—are mainly responsible. These policemen were coming home from some evictions; there was a river to cross; naturally enough, the people of the country did not look with any affectionate regard upon the force that was carrying out evictions in their midst, and several young boys ran into the stream and tumbled off the stepping stones, so as to have a little jolly revenge, and make the constables walk through the river. I do not think that any Englishman has the self-conscious dignity of an Irish policeman. I do not think that if as great disrespect had been shown to any Member of Her Majesty's Government, or even to a Royal person, any more indignant feelings could have been excited than were excited in these constables by the fact that they had to wet their ankles in the stream. What happened? Why, the few of us who were favoured spectators got a safe passage across; and the policemen were so chagrined at this, and at their having to walk through the stream, that they, without any other provocation, pushed into the crowd of little girls and boys who were standing on the brink of the river, and, shouting and laughing, punched and pummelled them unmercifully, leaving one young girl almost dead. It is for such services that you ask the Committee for this Vote. But it is not by pounds we measure the importance of this Vote; but by the bitter feelings you have engrafted in our nature by these acts, which you have asked us here to-night to pay for. You allow

your police in Ireland to do this shameful work for months together, and then you ask us to pay for it. Was there ever such a satire of civilized government? We have been told that this expenditure was not all incurred within the last few months, and not all incurred in connection with evictions. We are told that it was incurred in expenses consequent upon the Irish Elections. Why, what were the expenses connected with the Irish Elections? In the county, one division of which I have the honour to represent, we went in a four-in-hand, and no one opposed us; and why, because we thoroughly represent the feelings of the people in that demand the denial of which occasions this Vote. There practically was, at the last Election, no opposition. There were a comparatively few contests in any part of Ireland, and therefore there could have been but a very insignificant portion of this money expended on the Elections. But then, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland puts in another plea, and that is that some money was expended in connection with the Belfast riots. I really think that the right hon. Gentleman would do well not to open his lips on that subject. Members of Her Majesty's present Administration ought to speak with a conscious blush of the Belfast riots, knowing well that prominent Members of their Party had, in the first instance, fomented those riots. We, in Ireland, do not want sectarian quarrels. We who have lived in the South of Ireland, where we Catholics are in the vast majority, have no differences with our political opponents. If they were asked whether they suffered any inconvenience by the conduct we pursued, I am quite confident they would answer, No. The disturbances in Belfast were undoubtedly fomented by Englishmen in order that you might have an excuse for reverting to the old policy of coercion. The object of interested parties was to keep the Catholics and the Protestants at daggers drawn, and, naturally, there were fights and quarrels and disturbances. But how did you act towards them? Large bodies of these police, whose pay we are asked here to-night to vote, were drafted into the district; but they were not allowed to quell the riots. The magistrates of the district, who were all notorious partizans, practically bound the hands of

the policemen, just as practically, in fact, as if they took the handcuffs out of their pockets and put them upon the wrists of the men. The magistrates kept the policemen there as idle spectators of the disorder which continued for weeks disgracing that thriving and beautiful city, which would be a credit to our country if disorder were not continually fomented by interested parties inside and out. These are some of the duties in which the police have been engaged for the last few months, and it is for these duties we are asked to pay. When the Royal Commission, appointed to inquire into the origin of the Belfast riots, made certain recommendations affecting the police force in Ireland, and affecting their re-constitution, did Her Majesty's Government proceed to act? What have we foreshadowed in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland? Does he act on the recommendation of the Commission, which shows how disorder and disturbances can be averted in that city in the future? Did they act on the recommendation of Her Majesty's Commission, which has shown what are the causes of the employment of these police in Ireland in the last few months? Oh, no, they do not; but to a full House to-night, and to interested spectators in a distinguished quarter of the House, Her Majesty's Minister makes a brave boast that there must be more coercion of unarmed and defenceless people, more bayonetting, more drastic law in order to force law and order down the throats of the Irish people. In the presence of Her Majesty's Minister, and in the presence of this country, and in the presence of a hostile Parliament we, in the name of our people, defy you. We do not defy law and order; we want law; but we want law based on the will of the people as it should be in every civilized land. We want that order that arises naturally from the loyal obedience to that law. That is the law and order we want, and believe me, if you proceed in the line I have indicated, you will not want 14,000 armed policemen in Ireland to maintain law and order. If you will permit me, Sir, I will illustrate, by the comparison of the small number of policemen required to maintain the peace in a large district in England, what will be the normal condition of Ireland in what I hope will be the

near future, if you will only meet the views half-way which we put forward. Let not hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite always believe that in every word we utter we are actuated by one political impulse. Of course, I should never have them forget that there is one sentiment always pervading our minds and actions; but let them not believe that we pervert our minds on account of our opinion. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary say here to-night? He made certain observations with regard to meetings which were instantly contradicted by an hon. Friend of mine. Now, I want to say to the right hon. Gentleman that, to my own knowledge, many statements that he has to make on this question, and this extra police question, are as remote from the truth as the darker regions are from heaven. I make no personal reflection upon the right hon. Gentleman, or with the person with whom he is in immediate communication, but his information has to come through such a succession of filters that every particle of truth is taken out of the honest statement which should be made in this House. The right hon. Gentleman answered a Question put to him the other evening by an Irish Member about which I knew nothing, but which affected my constituency. It is pertinent to this matter, and that is the reason why I mention it. It concerns a man named Patrick Ferriter, who was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for having at a meeting I addressed, and which was presided over by the Ven. Canon O'Sullivan, called out to the Government reporter—"Take that down, Stringer." This matter was referred to here to-night. I was very much interested by the reference which was made by my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) to the position which these policemen on extra duty occupy in the crowd at Irish meetings. I presume the right hon. Gentleman has great experience of public meetings; and therefore I would appeal to him that in future when he has to send a Government reporter to a public meeting in Ireland he should not provide him with the very best spot in the crowd. He might order that the policemen should take a stand near the platform on the right or the left. I tell the right hon. Gentleman that if his intention is to maintain law and order in Ireland, and if the inten-

tion of the Government in sending Government reporters to our meetings be to cause us to mollify and tone down our speeches in a manner which will conduce to the fulfilment of his idea of law and order, he goes the very wrong way about it. What is it to any man who believes that even if he be not wholly free he is at least born to the inheritance of freedom—what are the feelings of such a man when he goes to a platform to address thousands of enthusiastic people, and the first spectacle presented to him is a crowd of 50 or 60 policemen, armed with bayonets, surrounding a man with a notebook, who has instructions to take down the words addressed to the people and send them to the archives of Dublin Castle? Do you hope to make our speeches any milder? Do you think we put a tooth in what we are going to say on account of such proceedings on your part? We Irishmen, whom you have never had the courage to taunt with cowardice, are we likely to do anything of the kind? I say deliberately that many a man addressing a public meeting—and I appeal to my hon. Friends who sit around me to say whether it is not their experience—that many a man addressing a public meeting is carried away by excitement to use stronger, far stronger, words than he would have used if the large police force had not been sent to the meeting. I do not pretend to have suffered much in that way myself. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) quoted the other night some words which he attributed to me; but I felt it my duty to deny having used them. I wish, however, to say that what I have said at public meetings in the presence of policemen and Government reporters, I say here in this House. I say that your whole system of employing a policeman, not merely on extra duty, is the result of a mistaken and vitiated policy; a policy that is wrecking and corrupting your administration in Ireland, and that that is the reason you find such difficulty in governing the country and in grappling with the Plan of Campaign or any other policy we pursue. I ask any hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench who may address the Committee in the course of the evening to say where in Kerry was the Plan of Campaign adopted. I have no knowledge of its being adopted at

all in Kerry, though it may have been adopted during the last few months. I have heard something of its possible adoption in the quieter parts of Kerry; but I ask the Government, Is the Plan of Campaign the cause of the disturbances and the cause of the disorder which take place in Ireland? Is the Plan of Campaign the cause of disturbance in Kerry? No; it is not. But I will tell you what is the cause, and it is that, from the year 1880 to the present time, you have evicted in Kerry 14,000 human beings, a greater record than that of any province in Ireland. You commenced your eviction work before there were any agitators there. For a long time the agitators have feebly tried to cope with you in inciting the people to engage in lawful and organized resistance to your atrocities. The agitators have been powerless there, because you got a long start of them. Now you have to maintain in Kerry an abnormal force of policemen whom we are asked to pay. Generally speaking, you maintain them in idleness—they only muster in force when any one of the local landlords want to evict the people, or any London mortgagee wants to burn down the dwellings. Now, what is the soothing prospect the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland holds out to us? It is that, in the near future, there is to be more coercion for Ireland; that the police force is to be augmented; that each jolly policeman, besides his 3*s.* 6*d.* a-day, is to have 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day. I suppose that the ordinary jaunting-cars will be considered beneath the dignity of the Irish policemen in future, and that they will desire that they should be sent on eviction duty in barouches and the like. It is a disgrace to us, it is a scandal to the Parliament of England, that you should be spending vast sums of money upon the police force in Ireland, while millions of people are crying out for food. I think Her Majesty's Government would do well to in some way or other qualify the speech which was addressed to us to-night. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) would do much for his Government if he were to stand up in his place and promise that something should be done towards ascertaining what are the grievances of the people, what are their wants and wishes, and what are the

means by which the use of this extraordinary expenditure can be prevented. I am glad to see that many hon. Gentlemen have visited Ireland during the last few months; indeed, Her Majesty's Government would do well if, instead of holding a Cabinet Council during the Easter Recess in Downing Street, they were to hold one in Glenbeigh or in Woodford. They would then have a chance of ascertaining the requirements of the people in respect of whose eviction this Vote is mainly asked. In conclusion, I will only ask that it shall not be said in taunt of us—"Shall we throw the government of Ireland into the hands of the Nationalist Members?" We do not want the government of Ireland; we do not want the sweets of Office; but we want you to understand what are the real desires of the people; we want you to have the courage to endeavour to construct some scheme of government which shall satisfy the people of our country. The people, when their grievances are removed, and their wants are satisfied, and their wishes are met in a fair and legitimate spirit, will seek out from every class, and creed, and position in the country men capable and willing, and with leisure, to perform the functions of representative government in that country.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): I object to every item in this Vote, and I think that if the people of this country understood what we are voting the money for, my objection would be one that would be endorsed by every right-thinking man in Great Britain. This Vote shows an increase of £30,000 upon the original Estimate which the Government, no doubt, thought sufficient when they prepared it. I dare say when reckoning up the original Estimate, they were not at all niggardly, but allowed themselves a pretty free hand. I should have expected a little more information as to the reason why this extra expense was incurred than what is published in the details I find on the face of the Estimates. The only additional information we have received, however, was the information we got from the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that these expenses, according to these details, were incurred for the maintenance of law and order in Ireland. Sir, I am sick of hearing those remarks "law and order." They are pronounced

with a judicial air on the Treasury Bench, and given to us in such a manner as though the whole question is, I will not say included, but not even opened. To tell us that "law and order" is enough to justify anything, is to assume that our intelligence is very slight indeed, or that our moral perceptions are remarkably blunt. "Law and order" forsooth! There is no place where there has been more law or order, and more absolute maintenance of it, than on board slave ships. You have absolute order on the deck, you have law and order in the hold where the human chattels are ranged in order and ticketed off. Proper law and order should be worthy of respect. Your law should be founded on justice, and your order should be the outcome of just law. But will anyone for a moment assert that the law in Ireland is just? Will anyone assert that the law—particularly the law as between the landlords and tenants in Ireland—is just? The whole means of living, so far as the tenants are concerned, are in the hands of people subject to caprice—a small class who have used their caprices for the purpose of the destruction of the people, and for the purpose of filling their own pockets, without the slightest regard to honesty. We are to maintain "law and order" by putting down the Plan of Campaign. This Plan of Campaign is declared to be an organized robbery, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary went as far as a gentleman of his courteous disposition could go, in insinuating that some of the Gentlemen below the Gangway on this side of the House were more guilty than anyone else in being participators in "organized robbery." People who use figurative language do not always mean what they say by it. On their part, it is rather an expression of feeling than any attempt to give utterance to a fact. But we do not hear anything like "organized robbery" applied to the landlords who for years have been drawing 50, 60 and 70 per cent over and above what the Courts of the country have now decreed to be a fair and proper rent. That was "organized robbery" if you like, and it was the worst sort of organized robbery. A man who comes and forcibly robs me in the street, or who, by sleight of hand, robs me of my watch, is a robber, no doubt; but he

is not so bad a robber as the man who robs me under the colour of the law, and through the agency of the administrators of the law. That is a man who outrages my feelings, who outrages justice much more. Such robbery is almost the common course of things; and it is very clear that he is a robber who in Ireland is the greatest enemy to society. He is a greater enemy to law and order than any "moonlighter" or anyone else, even the common footpad. When they talk of "organized robbery" they should look back. Why, a Judge on the Bench in Ireland described the rents in that country as felonious rents, putting it in the strongest manner possible. He said the rents were levied under a law made by the landlords, exercised by the landlords, enforced by the landlords for their own benefit. Oh! but it is said the tenants came to an agreement amongst themselves to say what is a fair rent. We never hear that argument allowed; but when the landlords took it upon themselves to say what is a fair rent, no one said them nay. If an argument is good it should be good both ways. It is an unfortunate thing when the tenants have to take upon themselves to say what is a fair rent, no doubt, and then venture to enforce their views. No doubt, that is a very unfortunate thing; but why did they do it? They did it because the landlords, in years past, ever since the system of raising rents commenced in Ireland, said what should be their rent. There was nothing at all said about fairness then. The rent was as much an imposition as that levied from the Israelites by the Egyptians; and I maintain that the Irish have as much right to refuse this imposition of the landlords as the Israelites had to refuse payment of the imposition to the Egyptians. Well, these are the arguments in support of this expenditure that we are asked to allow. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland says the Courts of the land have decided that this Plan of Campaign is illegal—I am not going to argue the question of the Plan of Campaign further than to say that it was introduced by the Chief Secretary—but he forgot what the highest Judge but one in Ireland—the Chief Baron of the Exchequer—said about himself in Sligo. This Judge said that, if he had the right hon. Gentleman before him, he would

give him precisely the same treatment as he was meting out to the Woodford rioters. He said the right hon. Gentleman's own conduct was altogether illegal. It may have been extra-judicial of him to do that; but he certainly gave that opinion with regard to the right hon. Gentleman's interference with the discretion of the landlords in enforcing their rents in the way they wanted to do. There is another remark I would commend to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman says enforcing the law is the only thing that policemen are employed for, and they are the special conservators of law and order in Ireland. Well, as the law stands in Ireland, every man who is evicted has six months to redeem his holding; and during those six months he has a legal right in the house he has built, and the landlord has no right, even under a warrant, to turn him out. I should like to know if it was in the enforcement of the law that 150 policemen were sent to Glenbeigh, to stand there and see the houses burnt down? It could not be, because, as I say, the tenants have six months' right of redemption. There was no law in it. Riots is one of the things which the police are paid for attending. I should like to know if the police deserve this extra pay, in consequence of the way they enforced the law in connection with the recent Belfast riots? For three months riot was allowed to run loose in Belfast and other parts of Ulster, but principally in Belfast. Some of the police got killed, and, though they are an armed military force, they were content to stand by while they were ill-treated in this way while the riots were proceeding, and without using their arms even to defend themselves. Of course, to stand by as lookers-on while bloodshed was rife on the streets by day and night was upholding law and order! The people of England have heard a great deal about these riots during the sitting of the Royal Commissioners, who had shown very clearly that this police force in Ireland that is paid in this way, so far as Belfast is concerned, is inefficient, and that a few parish constables would be able to do more than was done by the hundreds of police in Belfast that stood idle while the riots were going on. Then, as to Elections, I should like to know why the police were employed

about Elections in Ireland. There were neither riots nor disturbances at the Irish Elections, and yet the police are imposed upon the towns where elections are going on, and kept there for two or three days perfectly useless. No doubt, in times before the Ballot was the law of the land, it was pretty necessary to have a body of police in the streets during the elections—not only police, but troops also were employed. In England the law of the land prohibited such a thing as that; but, in Ireland, it was the general custom. *Magna Charta* and all the customs of this country notwithstanding, troops were present at all the elections. And there was not the slightest need for their assistance. Elections all over Ireland are perfectly peaceable and quiet; and I should like to ask how many of these items in this Vote have been spent in other towns except the two where riot existed for months together—namely, Belfast and Londonderry. Then the police were sent to meetings. Why were they sent to meetings? They were sent to meetings in their real character. We have 14,000 police in Ireland, and though they are called a police force, they are a police force no more than were the Royal Marines, who were sent over there some four months ago. The body is as much armed like a police force as were the Royal Marines. The fact of the matter is, it is a drilled, organized and disciplined army. It is all very well to call it police, and to say that it is intended to capture criminals, but we are told every day that it is absolutely inefficient for the capture of criminals, and it must be so, seeing that it is prohibited by its rules from holding intercourse with civilians. They are kept off from all communication with the people, and its object is simply to make away all public opinion and to intimidate the people of Ireland. Intimidation is the whole object of its being. It is sent to public meetings for the purpose of intimidation. After what the hon. Gentleman who has preceded me has said, I need not, however, say much about that; but I have attended myself plenty of public meetings in Ireland, and have never seen a disturbance or anything that called for the interference of the police. At every meeting in Ireland according to its extent you find a body of policemen varying from 20 to

100 strong standing with their rifles in the town. Why? People in England do not understand that kind of thing; for neither police nor military attend public meetings in this country. The English people would be most astonished if a meeting were called to discuss say, Municipal Reform or Manhood Suffrage, or even to propagate Socialism, and they were to see 100 or 150 soldiers marching upon them with ball cartridge in their pouches and sword-bayonets by their sides. The people of England had too much regard for liberty of public meeting and liberty of speech to stand such a system of intimidation for one moment; and, yet, this is the kind of use we are told these police have been put to, in order to rack the taxpayers of England and Great Britain generally, of the sum of £19,800 over and above the estimate for the financial year. Put an end to that. Meetings are peaceable in Ireland. They do not need the interference of the police, nor do they want the presence of police reporters. It is said that it is only to protect those reporters who are sent to make reports to Dublin Castle, that the police are allowed to attend; but it will not be necessary to send protection for the reporters, if those gentlemen go to the meetings and give no offence. But it seems that they are accustomed to go as the police do, for the purpose of insulting the people and defying public opinion. They go as the representatives of the dominant class, which is determined to keep the people down, which holds the rod over every assembly in Ireland, and only permits freedom of speech as a boon and not as a right; so that both the reporters who are supposed to be protected and the police who are supposed to protect them are both an outrage upon that free speech which is granted to the English people by the law of the land. Then I come to head F—Travelling expenses. We know that if policemen are employed in England for extra duty, they do not get extra pay. If a policeman has to go and attend a meeting during an election or anything else, he gets his extra expenses but not this 3s. 6d. they get in Ireland. Irish policemen must have cars and marching money. It is just like the expense of marching a military force through a hostile country, which it really is. It is a hostile country—hostile to the existence of such a force as that,

knowing perfectly well that the object of that force is either to outrage public sentiment, or suppress it. That is the reason the police are accommodated with cars when having to go a few miles in Ireland, and that they are allowed marching money to the extent of £11,060. It is quite as well that the people of England should know what they are paying this money for. It is just as well that they should know that it is not for police duty that they are paying, or for the suppression of crime; for, as I say, these men are absolutely useless for the suppression of crime. It is not for the detection of criminals, for as far as I know, or as far as it is explained to us, I am not aware that there is a single penny charged here for catching a criminal. The charge is made simply for the sake of creating a small reign of terror, for suppressing the opinions of the people, and for telling them—"You are under a rule which you must submit to, whether you like it or not, and which will follow you into all the relations of life, and watch every word spoken by you, or on your behalf; and if you make yourselves too restive under this restraint, we are prepared with another Coercion Act for you." That was the effect of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland; and I dare say he will be as good as his word. I dare say if this extra Vote is granted, as no doubt it will be, it will be an additional incentive to stimulate the police when they are wanted for the execution of this new Coercion Act. But I tell the right hon. Gentleman this new Coercion Act will be quite as useless as any of the 86 which have preceded it, and that it will do as little to change Irish public opinion, or reconcile it to the existing state of things; and it will do as little to remedy the real grievance we feel, which lies in our being supposed to enjoy Constitutional Government, when in reality we are under a despotism the worst in Europe. I am sorry to have trespassed so long on the attention of the House; but I think it necessary that these Votes should be ventilated fairly, and that the people of England should be made thoroughly acquainted with what they are spending this money for. I believe that when they are acquainted with that, they will do what we want them very much to do—namely, put a stop to

the spending of money that does not carry out the purpose it is supposed to be spent for, but is used for an entirely different object.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.): I was astonished to hear the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) this evening. He was put up to initiate and advocate the policy of the Government; but he said, in the course of his observations, that the Constabulary Vote was necessary to the maintenance of law and order in Ireland. Now what we complain of is, that the additional cost on this Constabulary Vote has been largely incurred through sending police where they were not necessary, and where there was not any possibility, nor any probability, of any breach of law and order. I attended, Sir, very many National League meetings in Ireland lately, and I must say I never found any necessity for policemen, more than a constable or two, it might be, to prevent an excess of drunkenness. I attended one in the Southern Division of Fermanagh about two months ago, one of the most loyal portions of the country; but, in spite of the loyalty of the district, at the meeting to which I refer, we had a large cohort of police. They did not come for the purpose of protecting the police reporter, because he was our mutual friend, Jeremiah Stringer, and we invited him to the platform and treated him as a gentleman. So that it could not be to protect him that they came. A short time after I went to another meeting, in County Cavan, in the constituency of one of my hon. Friends here—a meeting held in the town of Glengiolen, which the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. John Dillon) referred to to-day. We drove through the country—a very barren country indeed—and when we arrived at Glengiolen, we had an exceedingly large meeting. There was a large force of Constabulary there to receive us, although, as far as anyone could see, there was no necessity at all for it. But when we arrived there, the whole of one side of the road, for probably a quarter of a-mile, was covered with cars. I asked, "Why did all these come here; what are they for?"—and the reply given to me was, that they were cars used for conveying the Constabulary to the Glengiolen meeting.

Well, I never attended a larger meeting, and I never in my life saw a more peaceable crowd. The Constabulary, so far from being at all necessary, did not absolutely put in an appearance in force; for, as I say, we invited the Government reporter to the platform, by me, and instead of the Constabulary putting in an appearance, they assembled behind the next hill to that upon which the meeting was held. So that at those meetings that I have attended there were large bodies of Constabulary, and, as a matter of course, very large expense was incurred, and a large addition must have been made to this Vote for taking the police to these meetings. There was, as I have said, no necessity for them whatever. They did not, on the last occasion, even put in an appearance at the meeting, for the reporter was treated in a very proper manner, and allowed to go on to the platform and take all the notes that were necessary; and, so far as I have attended meetings in the North of Ireland—either Land League or National League meetings—I have never seen any necessity for a single constable whatever—that is to say, I have never seen the necessity for Constabulary except at those meetings where the men who talk about law and order either came to them or said they would come to them and break them up. I have been to several meetings, and I have heard clergymen and others on the platforms instructing the people in this fashion—I have heard it a score of times—“Neither take offence nor give offence, and do not do anything that will cause the Constabulary to resist you or to interfere with you in any way whatever.” So that I maintain that this additional Constabulary Vote has been incurred where there has been no necessity whatever in sending policemen to meetings of the most peaceable and quiet and orderly character that you could have any conception of. In point of fact, I attended the Socialistic meeting at St. Paul’s the other Sunday, and I assure the House that it was a much more rowdy place than any Land League or National League meeting that I ever attended. And yet there were no bayonets nor rifles there. There were constables present; but they were in their ordinary dress, and they certainly did not interfere with and rush the people about as

they would have been inclined to do if it had been a National League meeting in Ireland. In England, the relations between the people and the police and the people and the Government, are altogether different from the relations between the people and the police and the Government in Ireland. But, assuming that the police are necessary at evictions, we maintain that the police were sent to these evictions in undue numbers, therefore unduly increasing the cost of this Constabulary Vote. I recollect seeing a party in the town of Enniskillen—a party of Military and Constabulary collected for the purpose of carrying out an eviction in the neighbourhood. The force seemed more like an army than a Civil Force sent to do police duty. We had the Military there with their officers, and the Constabulary with their officers. We saw them all get upon cars. I do not think they ever get about without cars in that part of the country. Then the men were there with their superior officers, and the Resident Magistrate; and we all know that the conveying of police upon cars increases the cost of their operations very materially. We know that the sending of Resident Magistrates, not one but two and sometimes three with these armies; increases the cost of car hire, and that large extra pay has to be given to the men and officers. These eviction cases have increased the charge under this Vote to an undue extent, and admitting, for the sake of argument, that it is necessary to send a number of police to eviction cases, I say that the Government send too many, and that in proportion as they send undue numbers, so have they increased the cost, and this Police Vote has been swelled to the enormous extent that we now find it. But the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland said the police has to be used. He said the police had to be increased and used in various fashions to prevent the tenants being forced to join the Plan of Campaign. To that I entirely demur. The tenants were never forced to join the Plan of Campaign. It was a voluntary act on their part. I told them myself that the question rested with themselves and not with us. I told them I did not desire to press them to adopt the Plan of Campaign. I told them by no means let them adopt the Plan of Campaign if their landlords had treated them fairly,

and had made any fair overtures to them whatever, so I consider the statement of the right hon. Gentleman in declaring that the police had to be used for that purpose, and as a matter of course paid for the purpose of preventing tenants from being forced to join the Plan of Campaign is, to say the least of it, incorrect. I should not have time now to debate the question which the Chief Secretary for Ireland has raised in—to use his own phrase, speaking of “organized robbery.” I assure him when I hear an official of his ability and what I consider his kindness and geniality of disposition, making such a statement as that, I am induced to think that he does it more to irritate the Members of this Party, and to irritate the people of Ireland than anything else. It is that fact of hearing an official of his standing, who, on the whole, receives a fair amount of money himself and does not do anything for nothing—he is open to the accusation at any rate that was brought of old, that he does not serve the Lord for naught—it is hearing him talking about “organized robbery” which makes one almost boil with rage, only that it is contrary as a matter of course to the usages and traditions of this House for anyone to get enraged and angry on any question whatever. But if to appropriate the improvements and earnings of the Irish tenantry from time to time as I have known the landlords do in Ireland, be not robbery, I do not know what robbery is. Organized robbery of the grossest form, and legalized robbery into the bargain, has been committed by these landlords. The Plan of Campaign is not for the purpose of robbery. It is only for the purpose of endeavouring to get justice and fair play, and on the very same lines on which the right hon. Gentleman himself goes in Ireland. But the right hon. Gentleman took the kindly cases, and the cases that submitted to treatment; and we do but take the cases that would not so submit to treatment. Some of them, however, ultimately did submit to treatment, and we expect more of them to do so. The right hon. Gentleman said he did not wish to stop meetings in Ireland promiscuously; that he only used his Constabulary Force to suppress eight meetings. Well, he could not have suppressed these eight meetings without these Constabulary, and the Constabulary that he sent there

were sent at a great cost and expense; and I say that that item, whatever it amounts to for the Constabulary who suppressed these meetings, was unduly and improperly incurred and ought not to be paid. As a pure matter of business, there was no necessity for suppressing any meeting; and if he suppressed a meeting at an expense of £100, the eight meetings would bring the cost up to £800 or nearly £1,000, and that of itself was unduly expended and should not be put in this Vote. But I do not know what right he had to suppress eight meetings. He seemed to make very little of suppressing eight meetings; but I make a great deal of it. I think it is an un-Constitutional and illegal exercise of his power eight times told, and I do not think that the Government were authorized, under any circumstances, in suppressing not eight, but even one of these meetings. He said also that he should not have a word to say against Irish Members, nor, I suppose, against Irish meetings either, if they had acted in what he considered a Constitutional manner. Well, Sir, I thank the right hon. Gentleman for nothing. It is no compliment for him to say say to us that he would not have a word to say to the Irish Members nor to the Irish people; and that he would not have had to draft police into the localities if they had acted just as he had expected them to act, or thought they would have acted. But I cannot say, after all, that either the Chief Secretary for Ireland, or the Attorney General for Ireland, or the Solicitor General for Ireland, would have been so pleased if the people had acted as they say now they would have liked them to act. We hear lawyers from time to time, denouncing Acts of Parliament and other things; while all the time they are making handfuls of money out of the very things they are denouncing. I cannot therefore say that the Chief Secretary for Ireland or those other officials would be so very well pleased if the Irish people just went on the very lines they choose to say they would like them to go on. There would not be so much for them to do, and there would not be such high fees for them to reap. If the Irish tenants and the Irish Party are to go on the lines that the right hon. Gentleman says he wishes them to go on, what would the Irish tenants have got from him or from the

Government? We have again and again come to this House in what the right hon. Gentleman calls a Constitutional manner, and it has been almost impossible to obtain from Members of this House what we consider the rights of Irishmen. The rights of the Irish tenant, no matter how clearly or fully you prove the necessity of the case—and the rights of the Irish tenant have been pressed over and over again upon the attention of Parliament—have never been listened to until quite recently. We have had lately during the Premiership of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) the impossibility of obtaining justice for Ireland, especially the tenant farmers. We have had another illustration in the rejection of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell)—another illustration of the impossibility of obtaining justice or fair play for the Irish tenants through certain states of feeling in this House. So that we could not have obtained as much as we have obtained, had we maintained that docile position that the Chief Secretary for Ireland indicated that we ought to have done. But the Chief Secretary for Ireland also stated that the Government did not strain the law in Ireland. Well, if there is one impression that has taken hold of the Irish people more than another, it is that the law of Ireland has not only been strained, but is being strained now, and always has been strained against the tenant farmer and the democracy of that country. We consider that the Government has strained the law in every possible fashion. It has strained the law irrespective of what the Chief Secretary for Ireland said to-night. We believe he has strained it in proclaiming our meetings, when the Government has taken what is called the sworn affidavits of some person or other who apprehended danger. I remember a meeting at Brookborough in Fermanagh as to which it was sworn on affidavit by a clergyman in the midst of his parishioners, who chiefly attended the meeting, that there was no more fear or danger of a riot than there is at present on the empty Benches of this House; and yet that meeting was suppressed. It was not a meeting in the West of Ireland composed of people that the North of Ireland look upon as all barbarians; but it was in the midst of a loyal Pro-

testant population who believe in law and order as defined by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and in the Queen, and in other things of that sort as necessary not only to right living in this world but also to secure them a safe passage to the other. But we also believe that the Government has strained the law in striking jury panels. They have strained the law in that respect, not only in striking the panels, but in endeavouring to pack them.

THE CHAIRMAN: That subject is in no way connected with this additional Vote.

MR. JORDAN: Of course I bow to your decision, Sir. I have the greatest possible respect for your authority in the Chair, but I thought that following the Chief Secretary for Ireland I had a right to reply to the observations he has made in relation to the straining of the law. I am only explaining, but as you, Sir, have decided that I cannot refer to this question of the striking of jury panels, I will turn aside from that course. The right hon. Gentleman said he wanted additional powers to bring persons to justice. As a matter of course, in getting additional powers we all assume he is likely to increase and consolidate and conserve the Constabulary Force of the country. He said he wanted these additional powers, and very likely he would get them, to bring to justice those who had broken the law. Well, our ideas are different from the right hon. Gentleman's. We think that his idea of law is not justice. We think that in the administration of the law, and by introducing the Constabulary as he has done in many cases, that the administration of the law in Ireland has not been just: and if he seeks for further powers in that direction, I think that the Government might as well abolish juries altogether in Ireland and the ordinary administration of what they call law, and try our people by drum-head court martial, or something else of that sort, and let the Executive declare the guilt of people without any trial whatever. Having thus endeavoured to show that there was no necessity for the employment of the great number of police who have been employed owing to the National movement, in suppressing National meetings for the maintenance of the Plan of Campaign; and having en-

deavoured to criticize the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, I have much pleasure in resisting the additional Vote that is now sought to be imposed upon us.

MR. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.): I should consider myself a very poor type of Irishman if I did not carry out the wishes of my constituents, who have sent me here to protest as strongly as I can against these Supplementary Votes. It appears that this Vote of £19,800 is for the subsistence of policemen while attending riots, elections, and meetings. I think it cannot be said that the Government are at all bashful when they come to the House and ask us to Vote a Supplementary sum for the purposes of policemen attending at riots. Within the last 12 months there have been very few riots in Ireland. The only riots which occurred in Ireland that were worthy of the name, were those at Belfast; and I point out that they were largely, I may say almost entirely, instigated by a speech made in Belfast by the late mouthpiece of the Government, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). It was that speech which led to those monstrous riots, and necessitated the sending of an enormous body of policemen to Belfast and their maintenance there for a period of many weeks; and we cannot regard the Government as wanting in assurance in asking for a Supplementary Estimate under this head. It is only a few weeks ago that I attended a meeting of my constituents in South Armagh; it was called for the distinct purpose of considering their position with regard to the payment of rent, and it was not a meeting at which any disturbance occurred or was likely to occur. Nevertheless, a large detachment of police were sent there, and they came with rifles, batons, and cutlasses, so that anyone would have supposed, on looking at them, that he was in some other country than Great Britain—a country, for instance, recently annexed from the Hottentots. I protest, and that strongly, against the expenses which are incurred in sending policemen to quiet meetings throughout Ireland. It is a monstrous state of things to have a Government reporter placed upon your platform, his car hire and hotel expenses being paid by the people of Great Britain—a man sent there for no

other purpose than, so far as I can see, to pick a quarrel with those who represent the majority of the people of Ireland, for I hold that we, the Nationalist Party, represent the majority of the people there. I say there is no reason for the police being sent to such meetings, and there is no call for the enormous force of police now in Ireland. Not that I object to the policeman; I believe that an Irish policeman will make as good a Constitutional policeman, under self-government, as an ex-Constittutional policeman under the existing Government. I repeat that there is no reason for the unnecessary expenditure incurred in the course of the year for the hire of cars, railway fares, and for the marching money of these policemen; and I am glad to be here to lodge my protest in behalf of my constituents against this monstrous state of affairs. There was a meeting in another division of the county which I have the honour to represent. I refer to the meeting at Rosslea. What happened with regard to that? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland—acting, I have no doubt, on the misrepresentations of some of his followers in the county—telegraphed that it was necessary to proclaim this meeting, and, if necessary, disperse it by force. The right hon. Gentleman thereby deprived the people of the Constitutional right of expressing their views as to their inability to pay the rents which were then falling due. The people, outraged at this, betook themselves to different quarters of the district, and organized and held not only one but several meetings. Thus the right hon. Gentleman was completely balked in his effort to prevent the people assembling; while he put the people of Great Britain and Ireland to considerable expense which he might have saved them, and which a little forethought, under a Constitutional form of Government, undoubtedly would have saved them. I protest strongly against this Vote for a police force which is regarded with justice in Ireland as a force that is not there as guardian of the peace—not as a force which should look after the interests and welfare of the people—but as the persecutors of the peasantry and the rent extractors of the landlords. I am glad to tell the Chief Secretary for Ireland that if he persists

in sending his policemen down to that portion of Fermanagh which I have the honour to represent, he will find that the Nationalists of Fermanagh will be there as ready to do battle against his acts as they would be in Tipperary.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge): I rise to enter the strongest protest I can against the expenditure of money on what I consider tyrannical and unconstitutional purposes connected with the Irish Constabulary. I do not use those words lightly and without having considered their full meaning and import. The Government come before us with a great flourish of trumpets and a good deal of thumping of the war drum, to announce their intention of bringing in a measure of coercion for Ireland, and although they do not tell us what that measure is to be, it will be a very drastic one if it is to prove more effective than the Coercion Acts we are familiar with. But there is one factor which has not been taken into consideration, and that is that the British taxpayers are alive to what is going on in Ireland; they understand by the action which many of us are taking in the country that they are being taxed to an enormous and unnecessary extent in order to bolster up this wretched Government of Coercion, and in order to give landlords the satisfaction of exterminating the unfortunate tenantry of Ireland. Now, as sure as another Coercion Act is rushed through this House under the new process of fettering free speech which the Government are engaged in forcing on us, you will find—and I am speaking with some knowledge of the feeling of the country—that the country will not tolerate the suppression of free speech at public meetings and every other element of freedom in Ireland, for the mere pleasure of putting exaggerated sums upon the Votes for the purpose of maintaining a system of tyranny which they repudiate and loathe, and which would not be tolerated in this country. I have seen something of the action of the police in Ireland. I will not trench upon the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), in which he referred to the espionage system for which the Constabulary system is, to a great extent, maintained; but I must say that I know something of that, because no sooner did I set foot in Ireland and was seen in

company with the hon. Member for East Mayo, or Mr. O'Brien, than I found that the police were on my track. What perplexed me was that they did not try to arrest me, because I certainly went farther than some of those hon. Members who have been put on their trial. I rose, however, to place before the Committee some instances of what appear to me cases of wanton ruffianism on the part of the police. I will take the case of Glenbeigh. I am not going into the details connected with the evictions there beyond saying this. I will repeat what I have once before said, that during those terrible scenes of suffering I have seen the police behave with remarkable humanity; but I have also seen the police there and elsewhere behave with exaggerated activity against helpless women and children. I say that, when you find the police deliberately and without provocation hustling women and children and beating them down with their batons and the butts of their rifles, their action deserves and requires the strongest condemnation on the part of the Government. Then there was the case of 23 unfortunate persons who were illegally taken to Tralee Gaol, and who were met by a brass band and a general rejoicing, when the police rushed in upon the unfortunate people, broke one man's head, and otherwise behaved in what I call a most lawless and tyrannical way. I comment upon this, because these things on the part of the police do not happen in this country. It is not long since a similar incident occurred at Torquay, where some Salvationists were sent to gaol. When they came out they were met with a brass band, and there was a general rejoicing; but I have not heard that the police rushed in and broke the heads of the unfortunate people. Why do we tolerate things which take place daily in Ireland, and which would not be tolerated for one moment in this country? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has given us a long yarn about the woman who held out her purse with sovereigns in it, who would have paid her rent were it not for an execrable priest who prevented her doing it; but, when challenged, he refused to give us his authority. I think it would have only been candid on his part to have given us that other story of a priest, which everyone knows to be perfectly true—

namely, where a bloody encounter between the police and the tenants of Lord Cork and Orrery was prevented by the loyal, judicious, and patriotic action of a priest who effected a settlement between the agent and the tenants. I want this Committee and the country to understand that those unfortunate people, against whom Her Majesty's troops, gunboats, and armed police were sent, have been living practically upon seaweed and otherwise in the greatest state of destitution; while, for a number of years, Lord Cork and Orrery has been enjoying huge sums which have come out of the pockets of the taxpayers of this country—in the first place, on account of the sinecure of the Mastership of Her Majesty's Buckhounds; and, secondly, on account of his position as Master of Her Majesty's Horse, to which he was appointed last year at a salary of £2,500 a-year by the late Liberal Government. I say that this noble Lord is in receipt of public money, and that he ought to have more sense of humanity than to try to force to the ground and exterminate his unfortunate tenantry, whom he knows to be starving.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is entirely out of Order. He must direct his observations to the charge for the Constabulary Force provided for by the Vote before the Committee.

MR. CONYBEARE: I submit to your ruling, Mr. Courtney, and shall not pursue that subject any further. I shall, I hope, be quite in Order in illustrating my general argument as to the conduct of the police force, upon which I base my great objection to this money being voted, by a case which has recently come under my notice from the same part of the country. It is, I think, only right that public attention should be aroused to the enormity of the facts which I propose to bring before the Committee. Here is the case of a gentleman whom I know personally. Mr. Ferriter was present at a meeting which I addressed—he is not an unknown man. He occupies the position of relieving officer, or collector of rates; and I find that within the last week or two he has been summoned before the Resident Magistrate, on the ground that, at a public meeting at Dingle, he cried out "Hervey Duff" before the police, thereby exciting the people, and called upon to show cause

why he should not find securities for his good behaviour in future.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I fail to see how that case applies to the Vote before the Committee.

MR. CONYBEARE: I refer to it to show what was the action of the police in this matter—how they trumped up a charge against Mr. Ferriter which I venture to describe as one of the most infamous I have ever heard of.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not sufficient to point to improper conduct on the part of the police, it must be connected with the sum asked for in this Supplementary Estimate.

MR. CONYBEARE: I understand that the police were present, engaged on special duty, for which we are now asked to vote this extra pay. The police were standing, in my presence, around the Government note-taker, and it was by those police who were engaged on this special service—namely, protecting the Government note-taker, that this gentleman was brought before the Resident Magistrate and thrown into prison because he could not find bail.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I must rule that to be entirely outside this Vote.

MR. CONYBEARE: Then, I will not pursue the subject further. I will just mention briefly another case which occurred in the neighbourhood where I was. I believe I shall not be out of Order in doing so, because on that occasion the police were engaged in the service for which we are voting this money. Half a-dozen men were talking together in the house of a man named McNulty, and the police, who were under the impression that he had been illegally receiving money under the Plan of Campaign, rushed in and seized him. I refer to this in order to bring home to the mind of the Committee the extraordinary proceedings which are constantly taking place in Ireland by the action of the men for whom we are asked to vote special allowances. I will endeavour to keep myself within the limits of Order, by turning to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach). In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman explained that the cost of the Constabulary was necessary in order to secure law and order. Now, I venture to say that that is begging the question. We say it is not neces-

sary. The question is, whether the Government are not pursuing an entirely wrong method for securing law and order in Ireland. It was made most clear by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) that the action and policy pursued by the Government in relation to the police has a greater tendency to irritate and provoke conflict between the people and the constituted Authorities—a more direct tendency to bring law and order into contempt than anything that can possibly be devised. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to look back to the dark history of the Tory times in our own country—to the times of Lord Castlereagh; to the time when these same methods of coercion were practised by Tories in our country. The experience of those times proves the uselessness of the policy they are now pursuing in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman pursued, in some detail, the argument in respect to the estate of Lord Clanricarde, and asked us to believe that the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) would not have assisted the tenants on that estate. He asked us to believe that the tenants on that estate were perfectly able to pay, but were prevented, by a combination, from making any payment whatever. If I am not out of Order in criticizing the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman about the difficulty on the Clanricarde estate, I should like to remind him of what is the real fact about the non-payment of rent by the tenants there. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the whole difficulty arose from the compulsory rack-renting of the tenants in past times, because they defeated the land agent of Lord Clanricarde at a political election in 1872? Is he aware of the amount of the fines they have been subjected to because they ventured to show a spirit of independence? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the case of 10 or 12 tenants an annual fine, amounting in all to about £119, has been placed upon them because they voted against Lord Clanricarde's nominee? It may be the case, as the right hon. Gentleman said, that there were some of the tenants who could pay the rent, but refused to do so; but he should recollect that if there were some who, in combination with others, refused to pay, it was because there was a far greater number of poorer tenants

who could not pay under any circumstances; and who knew that it was only by standing shoulder to shoulder, as everyone in the country has a right to do, that they could get any protection.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I appeal to you, Mr. Courtney, to say whether the hon. Member is in Order?

MR. CONYBEARE: The hon. and gallant Admiral is really a little too hasty. I had just finished the point I was upon, and I only wish to add that it appears to me—no matter what the decision may be of the Irish Judges who pronounce their *obiter dicta* with all the appearance of infallible judgment—that the Plan of Campaign is justifiable. The right hon. Gentleman said also, at the conclusion of his speech, that hon. Members from Ireland who say they can maintain law and order under a system of Home Government, and with a Constabulary which would cost only £400,000, could only do so by abolishing property. I join issue with the right hon. Gentleman on that ground. It is not the hon. Members from Ireland who wish to abolish property. It is perfectly inaccurate to say that they or the tenants on any estate in Ireland desire to rob the landlords of their property. I have seen something of the condition of these estates and the condition of the tenants; and from inquiries I have made I can say, by the feelings evinced by the tenants in the most poverty-stricken districts, that there is not the slightest shadow of dishonesty on their part, or the slightest desire to say that the land belongs to them, and that they will not pay rent. They are willing to pay rent; but they are not willing to go on starving by inches in order to put in the pockets of the landlords rent which it is perfectly well known to political economists the land can never produce. There is another point which I wish to bring before the notice of the Committee with reference to the action of the Constabulary as affecting this Vote. It is the lawless policy of the right hon. Gentleman and his allies in permitting and sanctioning, in spite of all protests and representations, the employment of the police at evictions for purposes which I hold to be perfectly illegal. The legal remedy of the landlord is to regain possession of his holding. I challenge the Government to prove that the landlord has

any further right in the case of eviction than to have the holding which he desires to recover handed over to him by the Sheriff. But what has been done is more than that. At those evictions which my hon. Friend the Member for North Meath (Mr. Mahony) and I attended in Glenbeigh, we challenged the Sheriff to withdraw, and he did withdraw. But the Sheriff was actually impeded and obstructed, and prevented from going to other holdings to perform his duty there, because the whole body of police were wanted to stay and protect the incendiary agent. I challenge hon. Members to show a single Act under which landlords can require that the forces of the Crown can be kept from their proper duty of protecting the Sheriff in order to protect a landlord's agent in his work of incendiarism and demolition. I have not, at any rate, been able to find such a law. I admit that if the legal remedy of the landlord were to burn and demolish the houses on his estate, that he might then require the assistance of the police; but it is not within the functions of the police to stand by to protect the agent, and their action in this case has been altogether illegal and lawless. Well, Sir, I want to know how you can expect poor people in Ireland to have any respect for law and order when you have such an example of lawlessness set them by Her Majesty's Government. I ask the right hon. Gentleman under what Act it is that he has proclaimed meetings in Ireland? Has he proclaimed them on the information of persons who know nothing about the matter; or, if they do know anything, indulge in prognostications of mischief which, as far as my experience goes, are never fulfilled? As it appears to me, Her Majesty's Government, when last in Office, deliberately refused to continue the Crimes Act, and as I have been unable to find any other Act enabling them to put down meetings, except that Act which has expired, I am forced to the conclusion that their conduct is illegal and un-Constitutional. And yet we are told by those Gentlemen on this side of the House, who pretend to be Liberals, though they are supporting the Tory Government all the time—these so-called Unionists—that there is but one law for England and Ireland, and that Ireland enjoys equal laws with England. It was their constant cry during the last Election that Ireland was to be treated

on the same lines as England. I ask again would it be possible to proclaim meetings in this country as you are doing every day in Ireland? Would it be possible to do any one of these things that I have been placing before the Committee? If not, how idle it is to talk about the laws of England and Ireland being equal, or about there being any similarity between the administration of law and justice in the two countries. We are promised a new Coercion Bill, and I can only say that, so far as I am concerned, and so far as I know anything at all about the feeling of the country, the English people will not tolerate any longer the voting of these enormous sums of money, for they understand what it means to-day. They will not vote these sums of money for the perpetuation of this miserable, effete, coercive policy of the Government of Ireland. It is because that is my conviction—a conviction I have arrived at not by hearsay, but by mixing amongst the people of England—that, on behalf of the taxpayers of this country, as one of their Representatives, I protest against this extra police Vote.

MR. KENNEDY (Sligo, S.): I rise to protest against this extraordinary increase in the Vote for the Irish Constabulary, for the simple reason that, in my opinion, the expenditure on police in Ireland has been extravagant and unnecessary. I would trouble the Committee to examine how this Vote has been calculated. It is entered here as extra pay; but I do not see why the amount has been placed on the record as we find it. We are to vote the Estimate without knowing the exact figures which are to be put down under each head; for instance, the amount which is to be put down under the head of "evictions." I say it is voting in the dark—although to say the truth, however we vote this evening we shall be voting in a fog. There is one item here I think ought to be paid, that is the item for police in connection with the riots in Belfast. But though I consider that the expenses incurred in consequence of those riots should be paid, I would not impose the whole of the charge upon the National Exchequer. I think a part of it should be borne by the Members of the Government. I think that, as a peace offering and to meet the equity of the case, they should contribute one-half the expense of restor-

ing and maintaining order in that city. We hear a great deal indeed about restoring law and order in Ireland; but nothing has been said by any Member of the Government, with regard to the usual orderly condition of Irish towns. We have not heard it stated, for instance, that the metropolis of Ireland was without police for a period of nearly a-week, and that during that time there was neither murder nor robbery there. And yet Ireland is the country that is said to be in such a dreadful state that it requires this large amount of extra money to be spent upon the maintenance of law and order. I would ask the Committee to consider the tremendous extravagance of the different departments of the Constabulary in Ireland. There is one point which has not been touched upon during the whole of this discussion this evening, and it is an expenditure which I am sure, if properly estimated, would be found to amount to £200,000 or £300,000; and that is the appointment of men, nominees of the landlords of Ireland, to cadetships in the Royal Irish Constabulary.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am reluctant to interfere with a new Member; but I would point out to him that he must direct his criticism to the special sum asked for in this Vote and the services supplied by that sum.

MR. KENNEDY: Then, Sir, I would say that this money is expended unnecessarily, and I will give an instance in proof of my assertion. The duties of the police generally—at least in country towns, where no rents have to be exacted—are these:—To get up at 8 o'clock in the morning, to breakfast at 9, dine at 2, take tea at 7, and retire to bed at 10; except one or two, who may be allowed to go through the town at 12 when their very delicate constitutions call them to rest. I may say that in the Division that I have the honour to represent—namely, South Sligo—I appointed as my election agent a gentleman who had received most brutal treatment at the hands of the police. In that part of the country, the Representatives of the people are not allowed to address the people. I wonder would such a thing be permitted in England for a moment? What has happened in Sligo would not be allowed to happen in any other country which has any form of what is called a Constitution. But

in Ireland we have a Government which, though Constitutional in name, is no more—to use an American expression—than a one-horse Government. With these few words, and thanking the Committee for having listened to me, I wish to urge upon hon. Members the desirability of rejecting this Vote.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, L.): I should like to ask some of the Gentlemen on the Front Bench opposite how they propose to distribute this large sum added to the original charge for last year's expenses? I believe that if we put the tax upon the proper parties we should put it upon the landlords. It is the landlords who have been the cause of the Government and the Committee to-night spending so much time talking over this large sum of money. They it is who have been the means of bringing this charge upon the British taxpayers. Why is it that the British taxpayers stand these payments to policemen in Ireland? We do not want these men; we are prepared ourselves to pay for a regular Police Force to do police duty. We are prepared to maintain a Police Force in Ireland similar to that which we meet with in England. When I first came to London I thought I had never been in a place in the whole course of my life where there was so much liberty. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes, I think Englishmen have a right to be proud of that; but when I go to Ireland I find a very different state of things prevailing. Last Sunday I was passing up by St. Paul's, where I saw a large demonstration of people. It was composed of that class of people called Socialists. Now, I believe in London you have something like 9,000 Socialists, who are now hungering for bread, while you are giving the money of the British taxpayer to maintain a Force of Constabulary to collect the rents of the Irish landlords. I think it high time that the people of England, Scotland, and Wales struck against voting money for the purposes for which the Government ask us to give them this Vote to-night. With regard to a portion of these charges, I should like the Committee to say that it should be placed on the shoulders of the landlords on account of the number of emergency men they have employed through the country. We are asked to pay for a force to do the dirty work of the landlords after they have pulled down the

miserable houses of their tenants. Now, Sir, I think that we should be given information with regard to the Belfast riots by the hon. Gentlemen opposite who have been returned by constituencies in the North of Ireland. They have displayed considerable courage on former occasions; and surely they are now in a position to state how much of the money we are now asked to vote was spent in consequence of the riots in the town of Belfast, that great centre of loyalty, where every man is free, and loyalty reigns supreme. I am very glad to see that a large number of English gentlemen and Representatives of English constituencies have visited Ireland within the last 12 months; because I am satisfied that by so doing they have gained more information with regard to the policy of the present Government, and the general misrule observed in Ireland, than they ever could gain by listening to Irish Members here, although they speak nothing but the simple truth. [*Laughter.*] I wish many more of the English people, and those English Representatives who laugh at what I say, would come over to Ireland, and witness for themselves the tyrannical manner in which people are treated; I wish they would visit the district of Gweedore, a district I visited not long ago. I was there, I am sorry to say, at the time of some evictions, and saw 40 or 50 poor tenants driven out of their houses, and their doors closed against them—closed, not with locks, because there are no locks on the doors in that poor district—but closed against them by means of barricades. A large portion of the money they were now asked to grant was expended upon the force engaged in the eviction of these tenants. I saw many tenants who were forced out of their houses by the police lying in the ditches with nothing but straws and sticks to cover them. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh, but if they will go over to Ireland they will learn what straws and sticks mean. It is said that the people evicted are farmers, but I know what farmers are. These are people who occupy little farms, but who never earn in Ireland the landlord's rent; some of them have to go to Scotland, some to them to America, and some to England in harvest time to earn the rent, and when harvest time is over the landlord's

representative comes round the estate with a thousand or two policemen to collect the hard earnings of these people. The present state of things is very lamentable, and I am surprised that the British taxpayers, seeing that their manufacturing industries at home are declining, and that there is a general depression, do not strike against being called upon to pay these large and exorbitant sums for Irish police. But, Mr. Courtney, there is another aspect to this case—although this money is spent upon policemen, the policemen are in some cases very badly treated. They are very often put into inferior lodgings, and called upon to incur immense expense; wherever there is an eviction it is certain that all the cars and carts that can be obtained will be obtained for the conveyance of the policemen and their ammunition and baggage. I cannot help thinking that by this Vote the Government are really trying to manufacture evictions. It is a most grievous thing that the Government should lend a large force of police for the protection of landlords and the plundering of tenants. If we had the control of the police force in Ireland, we should certainly put them to their proper business—namely, the protection of the general public, their arms being the ordinary batons, and not have them perambulating the country armed with swords and bayonets. I claim that under a Home Rule Government, not under the Government of the present Chief Secretary (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) and the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) and Dublin Castle—we could manage the affairs of Ireland, with one fifth part of the present police force we could govern Ireland in a very nice manner, something like the way in which things are managed here; but London seems to be under the control of the people; whereas we are in Ireland under the control of the blood-suckers of the people. [*Laughter.*] Some Gentlemen on the front Government Bench know very well what I mean. To take the police from their real duties is not calculated to make us loyal, even if we were inclined to be disloyal. Well, Mr. Courtney, with regard to the Irish police force, I am sorry to say that it is not the rank and file, the farmers' sons in the police, who get these large sums of money. I do

not know whether any portion of the Secret Service money goes to the officers of the police.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman's remarks are very discursive; he must confine himself to the special sums asked for in this Vote, and the service covered by these sums.

MR. O'HANLON: I abide by your ruling, Mr. Courtney, but I believe that this large sum of £30,965 goes principally to the officers who are mostly the sons of worn-out landlords. [*Laughter.*] I do not mean worn-out by old age, but by debauchery. Now, I should like to know how long will the British taxpayers stand the present form of Government in Ireland. At present there are a great many Socialists in Ireland. The present system makes Socialists.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman must confine himself to the subject under discussion.

MR. O'HANLON: What I mean is this, that this £30,965 should be given, not to the policemen in Ireland, but to a party that requires it a great deal more. I venture to say that the magistrates of Ireland are very much to be blamed for this large expenditure. The Government appoint magistrates because they are thoroughly Party men, and these men are, in great measure, responsible for the extravagance of this expenditure. I do not think that the wisdom of English thinking men, and the shrewd judgment of Scotchmen, and, indeed, of Welshmen—and the latter are nearly as badly off as ourselves—will stand this much longer. The time is fast approaching when there will be an alteration. I cannot help thinking that if a true and fair issue had been put before the country at the last Election, this expenditure would not have been asked for to-night, because a Government is in power that, by rights, should not be in power. It is simply on this account that I wish to make my voice heard here to-night; and to let the British taxpayers know the cause and reason why so large a sum as £30,965 is dragged from their resources. I want to show, as an Irish Representative, that it really is unfair for the Government to come down to this House and to ask them to sanction the squandering of the money of the British taxpayers in this manner.

Mr. O'Hanlon

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): Mr. Courtney, the fact that there has already been voted for Police Services in Ireland no less a sum than nearly £1,500,000, and that we are now asked to vote a further sum of £30,965, invests the debate of this evening with considerable interest; and I think that interest has been very largely enhanced by the speech which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach). For my part, I should not have delayed the Committee by interposing in this discussion for one instant, were it not for the speech which the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to make; and in the few remarks which I propose to offer to the Committee I will endeavour to deal with some of the statements which the right hon. Gentleman has made. Sir, he started out with a statement which, of course, nobody will be disposed to deny—namely, that the maintenance of a Police Force in Ireland is absolutely essential. No one disputes that for a moment. No one disputes that it is essential that law and order should be maintained in Ireland. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I am glad to gain an approving cheer from that quarter of the House. But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that the kind of law and order which he desired to maintain in Ireland was law and order according to his standard. [*Cheers.*] The cheer is not so loud. I would like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman's own Supporters are of opinion that he has maintained law and order according to his own standard in Ireland? Why, Sir, the whole speech of the right hon. Gentleman's to-night was a confession of absolute failure and incompetency to govern the country. The law and order which the right hon. Gentleman desires he has failed to maintain, and yet we are asked for this large increase in the Police Vote. The right hon. Gentleman's own Supporters are my witnesses. Only to-day I was reading in the columns of a paper, which I think the right hon. Gentleman has quoted from time to time, although he is remarkably shy in acknowledging his authority—*The Dublin Daily Express*—only this morning I was reading an article in that journal denouncing the

present Government because they have not maintained law and order in Ireland; and the right hon. Gentleman acknowledges as much when he winds up his speech by saying that it will be necessary to ask for further powers. My point is this, that this large and exorbitant amount of money for police services is money practically thrown away, because it has not effected any good purpose towards maintaining law and order; but, on the contrary, has led to the disturbance of law and order very frequently in Ireland. It is true there has been during the winter months of this year a remarkable absence of serious crime in Ireland; but does the right hon. Gentleman contend, for a moment, that that is the result of the action of his police, or of his government? Allusion has already been made to this point by my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who initiated this discussion. My hon. Friend alluded to a point which I would beg permission to emphasize, and which is most significant—namely, that you cannot for the past 50 years put your finger upon any period of similar agricultural distress in Ireland which was less stained by agrarian crime than the winter months up to last Christmas. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) thought proper to speak of the Plan of Campaign, which was admittedly organized by the hon. Member for East Mayo and others, as a system of organized robbery. Well, the right hon. Gentleman used to be distinguished in this House by the courtesy with which he conducted discussions. I am sorry to observe that his experience at the Irish Office has so severely tried his temper, that he has forgotten those courtesies which have always regulated his action and speech in this House up to the present time. Sir, it is the Plan of Campaign, and not the police, which has preserved Ireland from months of bloodshed and crime. ["Oh, oh!"] I assert that where the police have failed, the Plan of Campaign has proved itself a bulwark of the public peace. I do not want, if I can possibly avoid it, to stray from the subject. I recognize the fairness of your rulings, Mr. Courtney, and I desire to speak within those rulings; but I would like to point out, as this matter has been raised by the right hon. Gentleman, that in those parts of Ireland where the Plan

of Campaign has been at work, notably on estates like that of Lord Dillon, there has been an utter absence of agrarian crime; and that crime has appeared where public meetings have been suppressed, where the Plan of Campaign has not been put into operation, and where the right hon. Gentleman has had a free hand for his firm and resolute government. An allusion was made by the right hon. Gentleman to the evictions which have been taking place. The chief part of this Vote is asked for the expenses of policemen at these evictions; and the right hon. Gentleman went, to some extent, into the merits of these evictions, and in regard to these particular instances I claim a right of answering him. He alluded to the evictions on Lord Clanricarde's estate, and he asked us, did we venture to deny that some of the tenants on this estate could pay the rents but had refused? The right hon. Gentleman ought, in the first place, to have answered the challenge which my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo gave him. He ought to have answered specifically the question—Was Lord Clanricarde's estate one of those estates to which the Government applied that "pressure within the law" of which we have heard so much, and was that one of the estates on which they failed? Because, if it was one of the estates, if Lord Clanricarde was one of the landlords whom the Government attempted, by their pressure, to induce to make reductions, and they failed in their object; with what a face does he come to this House and charge us, as if it were a crime, with, forsooth, simply carrying on a course of action which he himself initiated! On this point of the tenant, in case of eviction, being able to pay the rent and refusing to do so, a very significant piece of evidence has been given within the last few days. What does your own Commission say? It was remarked that the very first thing that this Unionist Government did was to show the very greatest ignorance of the state of facts in Ireland. They disputed the deductions of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) when he introduced his Tenants' Relief Bill. They disputed that there had been such a fall in prices of agricultural produce in Ireland as to make the full payment of judicial rents impossible. They appointed a tribunal

of their own. Their own tribunal has given us a verdict against them. Their own tribunal has laid down that prices have fallen at least 18½ per cent, and that in consequence the payment of judicial rents has become impossible; and it is relying upon that fact, to which the Commission bears testimony, that the tenants upon the Clanricarde estate, and those who have been supporting them, have entered into this movement. I pass, now, to another point—namely, that of the action of the Government in the suppression, or the attempted suppression, of public meeting. Now, Mr. Courtney, my first contention is that the action of the Government in the attempted suppression of meetings in Ireland—for which attempted suppression a portion of this Vote is asked—is illegal. I maintain that the Government have no legal warrant for the action that they have taken. Sir, it is laid down by great authorities—by Coke, for instance—that a Proclamation is a very respectable thing when it is founded upon Statute. I should like to know upon what Statute the right hon. Gentleman's Government has proceeded in the cases where they have attempted to suppress public meetings in Ireland. No doubt, meetings may be illegal, and persons taking part in them may be guilty of illegal acts, for which they can be punished. Any persons so taking part can be brought to justice, and meetings, if they are illegal, can be dispersed; but I maintain that there is no power vested in a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or in the Home Secretary in this country, either by Statute or Common Law, which empowers either of them to prevent a meeting assembling, simply because they have reason to believe, from one source or another, that the meeting, if it assembles, will be an illegal meeting. Sir, I hold in my hand a Constitutional authority that was quoted often in the debate upon the Home Rule Bill—I mean Mr. Dicey's "Law of the Constitution." Mr. Dicey says that just because men may come where they like and say what they please, and have a right to hold meetings for the discussion of political and other topics, it is not, of course, meant that persons may so exercise that right of meeting as to break the law; and he adds that if a meeting is illegal, the persons taking part in it will be exposed to all the con-

sequences. [An hon. MEMBER: Certainly.] The hon. Member does not comprehend my point. Perhaps, Mr. Courtney, the fog is thicker upon the Ministerial Benches than upon those upon which we sit. Mr. Dicey argues that if a meeting is illegal, a person taking part in it will be exposed to all the consequences in the way of having the meeting broken up and being arrested and prosecuted. My point is that if these meetings had been illegal, your proper course would have been to disperse them and to prosecute the men taking part in them; and that you have legally no power to send a force into a town and say—We will not allow such and such a meeting to assemble at all. What was the course of action taken by the Government? They issued Proclamations, in which they said that informations having been sworn and submitted by certain individuals that these individuals believed that a meeting about to take place will be an illegal one, therefore we prohibit the assembling of that meeting. Now, I will invite attention to this point. My first criticism of that portion of the Vote which is asked for police services in the preventing of these meetings assembling is, that that action on the part of the Government is absolutely illegal. Mr. Dicey says, further on, supposing, in England, that the Home Secretary thinks it is undesirable, for one reason or another, that a meeting should take place, and serves formal notice on every member that the meeting must not take place, this notice is so much waste paper; and he goes on to say that the whole principle upon which the Law of Public Meeting is based is that the function of the Government is not the prevention but the punishment of illegal acts. I find that, in Paterson's book on the *Liberty of the Press and Free Speech*, it is stated that there is—

"No prohibition on account of the subject-matter of the meeting except for blasphemy or sedition, to which may be added"—

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): That's not—

MR. J. E. REDMOND: I have heard that the hon. and gallant Gentleman is an authority on military matters, and his authority on those subjects may be very great, although I have also heard that he is only a feather-bed soldier; but I think he can scarcely be taken as an

authority upon questions of law. I am simply quoting authorities on the question of public meeting, which enjoy the respect of everybody except the hon. and gallant Gentleman—

“To which may be added that any assembly becoming riotous or unlawful in the sense of pursuing unlawful conduct, there is a mode of summary treatment.”

My point is, even if these meetings had been unlawful, which I deny—but even granting that—the Government acted illegally in attempting to prevent those meetings; their only legal course would have been, supposing the meetings to have assembled, to have dispersed them and to have prosecuted those persons who had taken part in them. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland made two or three selections, by way of proving that the meetings were unlawful. The first example that he gave was the case of the Sligo meeting. I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman was not ashamed to mention the name of Sligo. What was the Sligo meeting called for? It was to consider the question of a certain jury panel—a perfectly legal purpose—and that jury panel, when it was submitted to the test of examination by the Court, was quashed. I maintain that that meeting was not illegal, that it was a meeting called for a laudable and for a lawful purpose; and I say it is monstrous to state that a panel which the Judge quashed on the grounds of its illegality, could not be a fair question to be debated at a public meeting of the county where the illegal panel was struck. Then there was the meeting which was held at Coolgreaney, about which the right hon. Gentleman is certainly under some misapprehension. I wish to speak upon a point which, no doubt, will interest him. I hope he will not think I am using an offensive phrase—[“No, no!”]—I try never to use such, though, perhaps, Members who interrupt have less consideration for me—when I say that I am afraid that the right hon. Gentleman is fooled to the top of his bent by his sub-officials in Ireland. Mr. Courtney, I took part in the proceedings at Coolgreaney, and the account which the right hon. Gentleman has given, I can assure him, is ludicrously inaccurate. He spoke about Mr. Dillon and myself driving about the country, and calling and holding

hole-and-corner meetings at long distances from the places where the proclaimed meeting was expected to be held. Now, I am perfectly acquainted with all the proceedings in this locality—as a matter of fact, I come from that part of the country myself, and I think it may be presumed that I am intimately acquainted with the geography of the district. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that five public meetings were held within a radius of three miles from the place, although mounted police patrolled the roads with instructions to gallop after any people whom they saw going in any direction. I can say—and I say so after a very large experience of public meetings—that there were at least 2,000 or 3,000 people present; there were to my own knowledge four brass bands, and there were a number of large banners carried by the people, some of whom came so far as from the town of Wexford—about 30 miles distant—in a special train, accompanied with a band playing and banners waving. How the police were completely ignorant of that meeting I cannot make out; and how the right hon. Gentleman is able to assert that these meetings were composed of only a score or so of people, I am unable to understand. From whence came his information? There were no members of the Royal Irish Constabulary present. How, then, did the statements come to his knowledge? I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will believe me when I say that, as a matter of fact, the meeting at Coolgreaney was one of the largest meetings I ever addressed in the county of Wexford for many a day. When the right hon. Gentleman, in the course of his speech, said that the Coolgreaney meeting being proclaimed was not held, I told him that it was held, and that I myself made a speech at it. The right hon. Gentleman replied to me—“That is not the case.” I retort now by saying “That it is the case.” At Coolgreaney, about 5 o’clock in the evening, several cars full of persons, headed by a mounted escort, drove into the town. As we entered two large bodies of police were coming out, thinking we had no intention of holding the meetings. On this occasion, as has been said by my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), some of the constables in the ranks turned round and laughed at us; but their laugh was more

at the Government than at us. We went into the town, and there we found a small body of policemen unarmed. We drove past them, and there—in the very public street—we held a meeting, with the hon. Member for the County Dublin in the chair, at which he, a clergyman, myself, and other persons spoke. After the meeting was finished, we walked along the street, and met half-a-dozen policemen coming up, who were exerting themselves in hustling the people; and, had it not been for the exertions of my hon. Friend the Member for Dublin County, these five or six policemen might have probably met with very rough handling from the crowd. Having stated these facts at, perhaps, unwarrantable length, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will do himself the justice to inquire into this matter. He has been misinformed; he has been inaccurately misled by an absurd story. Somebody is responsible for that, and I ask him to trace the responsibility. Another point with reference to this Coolgreaney meeting which was mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman was, that the object of that meeting was illegal; and he went on to enforce his statement by evidence which was to the effect that the Plan of Campaign was wrongfully adopted on the estate there; and that the landlord had always lived on good terms with his tenants until the hon. Member for East Mayo stirred up the people, and put the Plan of Campaign in operation against him. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the hon. Member for East Mayo had been induced to take that action in consequence of the appointment of an obnoxious agent. Does not the right hon. Gentleman know that Captain Hamilton, the agent of this property, was appointed to his position three years ago? Does he know any of the facts about the rents on this property, or the simple fact that the average of the rents on the property is 30 per cent above the valuation? Now, the average rent of every neighbouring estate is in or about the valuation; and the people of this property only asked for a reduction down to the valuation. I have in my hand some startling figures about two or three neighbouring estates. I find in the Return of the Land Commission for September and October in the county of Wicklow—Coolgreaney being on the borders of Wicklow and Wexford—that

on the property of Mrs. Bookey the old rent in one case was £40, the valuation £32, and the new judicial rent £21. Again, I find old rent £60, valuation £52, and new rent £43. On the property adjoining—the property of the Earl of Meath—I see the old rent is £7 10s., the valuation £8 5s., and the new rent £5 10s. On the property of Fitzwilliam Dick, adjoining, I read—old rent £400, valuation £248, and new rent £200. In the face of facts like these, I ask this Committee not to believe that the rents on the Coolgreaney estate are fair rents. They are exorbitant and impossible rents. I hope, accordingly, that nobody will pay the smallest attention to the anonymous story which the right hon. Gentleman told us about the tenant's wife with the purse. If he wants to make a point of that story, he needs to give his authority. He said that it was taken from the newspapers; and if it was taken from any fair-minded newspaper in Ireland, he would be only too delighted to give his authority. But it was evidently taken from *The Daily Express*, or some paper of that character, or, perhaps, some similar publication to that which the other day the right hon. and learned Home Secretary quoted, and afterwards repudiated—a publication of the so-called Irish Loyal and Patriotic League. I think it is an unworthy thing that the right hon. Gentleman refused to quote his inspiration. It was unworthy of him to bolster up his case with statements of an anonymous character, and that more especially because it is quite untrue that the hon. Member for East Mayo had anything to do with the starting the Plan of Campaign on the Coolgreaney estate. My hon. Friend never heard that the Plan was to be adopted until a deputation of the tenants came to him, and begged that somebody might be sent there to assist them. It was altogether the spontaneous action of the tenants on the estate; and I say that the conduct of the police in interfering with the meeting which was held for the purpose of exposing the rack-rents on the estate, was illegal and unconstitutional, and should not be sanctioned by a Vote of money in this House. I need not express the gratification with which I learn of the difficulties under which the right hon. Gentleman acknowledges that he is suffering in defending his

action in this matter. An hon. Friend tells me that the right hon. Gentleman alludes to a physical difficulty. I had not that in my mind just now: I merely referred to the political difficulties that he must experience in endeavouring to support the policy of the Government, which is un-Constitutional and utterly ineffective. I am glad the country is beginning to realize what is the result of the attempt to rule Ireland by a firm and resolute Unionist government. We have had six months of it, and now, in addition to the ordinary sum of £1,500,000, we are asked to vote £30,000 more for the Irish Constabulary to enable them to carry out this government. The Government is proving, day by day, their utter incapacity to understand the Irish Question. It is running the most enormous risks, and the further it goes on in the course it has laid down the greater will be the difficulties to be faced. To anyone who has read the history of Ireland, it is quite evident that the course of action on which the Government are entering can have only one ending—namely, the suppression of free speech, and the imprisonment of Members of this House and other popular leaders, and the meeting, face to face, of the people deprived of the weapon of open discussion, and without Members of this House being able to restrain them. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen who have never read a line of Irish history may laugh; but so sure as the sun will rise to-morrow, they will laugh very differently this day six months if the policy of the Government is carried out. The right hon. Gentleman sees that because his police and his government are ineffective, notwithstanding the enormous amount of money spent, he will have to come to this House and ask for further powers—further powers for what? To suppress crime? Why, the right hon. Gentleman knows that there has been within the past 50 years no single period of similar agrarian distress in Ireland when there has been less crime. He surely will not attempt to deny that statement; for it is a statement made publicly by the noble Lord the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill), when it suited his Party to say that Ireland was peaceful and tranquil. Why, then, are these new powers asked to suppress crime? They

are not needed, and the Government knows that. Ah! they ask for these powers—and the right hon. Gentleman admitted the fact—in order to obtain convictions. But what convictions have the Government failed to obtain? The only notable case where convictions were not obtained was the case in Omagh, in the County Tyrone, where certain Orangemen were put on their trial for murder before a “Daniel come to judgment,” in the shape of Judge Lawson, who actually told the jury that it was their duty to convict, and if they did not convict that they would violate their oaths. This was the solitary case where the Government failed to convict, unless their failure to convict my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo the other day in Dublin is meant. And as regards this case, there is not a man on the Benches of the House who does not know that the imprisonment of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo is not the way to pacify Ireland or to maintain the public peace and order in that country. I am not sorry for the difficulties which beset the Government, and I know quite well that the road on which they have entered will land them in fresh difficulties. I think that the sooner they bring in their Coercion Bill, the sooner will come the crisis, which, when it does come, will open the eyes of the English people to the failure of the Government to rule our country; and to the impossibility of this or any other Government attempting to rule Ireland without paying regard to the sentiments and aspirations of the people. Then room will be made for a Government which prefers to base its rule upon conciliation, and upon the golden link of affection, instead of depending upon bayonets and bullets. [“Oh, oh!”] I repeat, upon the golden link of affection. You Gentlemen opposite are having your innings. Try your bayonets and bullets, and we will see what the result shall be.

MR. JAMES ELLIS (Leicestershire, Bosworth): As the Members of the Committee have heard the opinion of the Irish Members, I should like, if they would allow me, to make a few remarks from the point of view of an English County Member. In this matter, I must confess it seems to me that the amount which was voted in the ordinary Estimates was a quite sufficient sum to keep down the people of Ireland. I under-

stand that this Vote is divided into three portions. One portion was employed in suppressing the riots at Belfast; another was employed in sending police forces to attend meetings of the tenants; and the remaining portion was expended in efforts to collect the rents of the landlords of Ireland. I say that if this money—this enormous sum—must be expended in Ireland—that if, besides, it is just and right to expend it in Ireland, the Irish people themselves ought to pay for the expenditure. The people of Belfast ought to pay for the rioting expenses in Belfast; and if the landlords of Ireland have so managed their affairs that they are obliged to employ English bayonets in the collecting of their rents, the landlords themselves ought to pay for the employment of these bayonets. I also say that if it appears to the people of England, Scotland and Wales, that the people of Ireland are so rebellious against their Rulers that they must be kept down, and that bayonets and policemen must be sent, then the Irish people ought to pay for all this; for if they are guilty, the whole sum ought to be borne by them, and not thrown on the people of the United Kingdom. But I believe that, if we took the right way to govern Ireland, about £400,000 would be a sufficient amount for the police in Ireland. I believe the statements which have been made by the Representatives of the Irish people in this House, and that, if the country was ruled properly and fairly, very few soldiers or policemen would be required to enforce the law.

MR. B. COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe): I think it is time that more than one Member in the House representing English constituencies should desire to say a few words in sympathy with the Irish Party. We are asked to-night to vote what I may call an extra-additional sum for the force of extra police in Ireland. Now, we on this side of the House find some difficulty in speaking upon this subject, because we are met with a plentiful lack of argument from hon. Gentlemen sitting on the opposite Benches. We have heard to-night from the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) a series of facts which have not been disputed, and which cannot be disputed, because they are true; and these facts, not being contradicted, tell a sad tale of the manner in which this money has been disposed of. There are two

arguments usually brought forward by hon. Gentlemen opposite in this Committee upon the question of Supply when Irish matters are being dealt with. The one is, that the money has already been spent, and that therefore it is not right to embarrass the Government. That, however, is the old and stale argument which all persons who desire this great Empire to be economically administered will at once dismiss from their minds. The other argument is, that this money has been disposed of in the maintenance of law and of order. Sir, we have heard in what manner law and order has been maintained. I would ask any candid Member in this House whether we in England should stand for one moment the application of money to such purposes as these. Should we, I ask, spend any money on the suppression of public meetings? Should we stand and allow the maintenance of law by the means of soldiers, of bayonets, and of an armed police force. We should do no such thing. I venture to think that on the very last occasion in English history, at Manchester, in 1819, when English swords were used to break up public meetings, the feeling in this country was so unanimous, strong, and overwhelming that, from that day to this, no deliberate and organized attempt has been made to suppress the freedom of speech. I say that the measure we mete out for ourselves we should mete out for our fellow-citizens in Ireland. And yet it was said that the maintenance of law and order was involved in the suppression of freedom of speech and in the extortion, by the bayonet, of rents which the Government itself had declared to be unfair? When the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) brought in his Bill to deal with the question of Irish rents in the last Session, the argument was used in rejecting that Bill by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that the facts which the hon. Member for Cork had adduced in supporting his Bill, though not denied, had not been fully or satisfactorily proved. These facts have now been proved by a Commission of the Government's own choice. It can no longer be said that these facts, which were known to the hon. Member for Cork, are not definitely known to the Government. What is the result of the Report of that Commission selected to order by the Government? It is this—

that the money has been spent in the exaction of rents which the Report of the Commission showed were unfair, and should not be exacted. I ask, were law and order synonymous with the exaction of rents which a Commission had reported to be unfair? I say, that in order that law should be respected in any country, it should be consonant with justice. I ask whether, under the prostituted name of law, any greater or more substantial injustice has ever been inflicted? It is for these reasons, on behalf of an English constituency, that with voice and with vote I shall oppose this Vote for extra Constabulary in Ireland.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): We have passed a few hours in discussing this Vote from a very general point of view; but the bearings of the question of the Police Vote apply generally to the state of law and order in Ireland. I will detain the attention of the Committee for a few moments—I shall not be long—while I bring before it a specific case in which these extra police were engaged in a disturbance, and in dispersing a meeting that was perfectly legal in its objects and quite peaceable in its demeanour. Sir, at Cork, on December 1st of last year, a meeting took place in the streets of that city, which had for its object the expression of the opinion of the citizens of Cork of the scandalous state of things that existed in connection with the holding of the Munster Assizes in that city. Now, Sir, the object of this meeting was stated by myself a few days before at a meeting which I then addressed. For some time the citizens of Cork had to complain that at the Munster Winter Assizes which were held year after year in their city, they were called from their daily avocations in order to perform the duty of jurors at those Assizes. The Government know very well the reason why they held the Assizes annually at Cork. It was because, by a judicious packing of the juries, year after year, they were enabled to get convictions which seemed to be so desired by the Government in the present day. Well, Sir, the obsequiousness of the selected jurors of Cork was gaining for that city a most unenviable notoriety. The merchants of the city protested—and protested in vain—against their city being made the means by which the Government were able to

carry out what I must style their iniquitous intention. The character of the city was spoken of all over the country. The trade of the city was being damaged, and the commercial men of Cork, who visited other towns throughout the country, began to be insulted and sent out of the houses of the shopkeepers because of the unenviable character that the city of Cork had obtained, owing to the manner in which these obsequious jurors obeyed the dictates of the Crown Prosecutor. Well, as I say, I addressed a meeting of the city, and I said that if we had held the meeting which was to have taken place on the Sunday previous it would have been suppressed, just as the Sligo meeting was suppressed. Why did they hold the Sligo meeting, and why had we intended holding a meeting in Cork? It was to insist that trial by jury in Ireland—that precious gem of the British Constitution—should get fair play. That was the object of the meeting about which I wish to inform the Committee. I believe, Sir, that for a meeting to be suppressed, it must be an unlawful one, or some people must have something to fear from the outcome of it. I believe, also, that it is necessary for a meeting to be unlawful, that it should threaten a breach of the peace. It will be my duty to show that the object of the meeting to which I am going to refer was perfectly lawful; that the mode in which it was carried out did not threaten a breach of the peace, and that no one had anything to fear. The meeting was suppressed in the most flagrant and most outrageous manner. It was held on the occasion of the trial in the city of a man who is now famous in Ireland—namely, Tim Hurley. This trial was held on December 1st, and I wish to call the attention of the Committee to a meeting which was held the day before, a meeting of the most prominent citizens of Cork. The meeting was held in compliance with an influentially signed requisition, and was presided over by Mr. Alderman O'Brien, the Mayor-elect of the city. It was attended by many Members of this House and by many influential people amongst the merchants and traders of the city. At that meeting the following resolution was passed:—

“That we, the Catholic jurors of Cork, in public meeting assembled, emphatically protest against the custom of the Crown officials at the

Cork Assizes in ordering Catholic jurors to stand by after answering to their names in obedience to their summonses, and in view of the approaching Assizes we hereby determine to protest openly against this indignity inflicted on Catholic men in the event of the Law Officers attempting to repeat or perpetuate this insulting treatment."

It was not alone in Cork that the Catholics had reason to complain of this system of packing juries. [*Cries of "Question!"*] I am endeavouring to show the necessity there was for this meeting and the lawful character of the assembly which was scattered by these extra police for whom we are asked to vote pay and rewards. I think it is absolutely necessary that I should prove the lawful character of this meeting to justify me in proposing, as I intend to propose, the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000. A short time before that certain Catholic jurors in the county of Sligo in like manner met and protested against their Catholic fellow-countrymen being told to "stand by" by the Crown Officials. Therefore, it is that I and my hon. Colleagues the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), with other Members of this House who dwell in that city, took the opportunity of the assizes in Cork to protest, in the strongest manner, against this system of jury packing. And now I will proceed to relate what took place on the famous occasion to which I am drawing the attention of the Committee. The meeting assembled outside the Court House. The assizes had not then been opened. The Grand Jury had not been sworn. There was no reason why we should not hold the meeting. There was every reason why we should consider it our duty, bearing all the facts in mind, to protest against the system of jury packing. The meeting took place, and I proceeded to address it in the following manner—

"We assembled the other day to demand justice, and we are assembled to-night to demand justice—to demand what the British Constitution itself concedes, to demand that justice will not be denied or delayed through anyone. Justice has been polluted at its source. It has been polluted within the four walls of that building (pointing to the Court House)."

While I was proceeding in that fashion, a slight disturbance appeared to take place in the crowd, and having inquired into the nature of the disturbance, I found that some persons were objecting to the presence of the Government re-

porter. I appealed to the people, and asked them not to interfere with Mr. Agnew, which was the reporter's name. I told the people to allow him to come on the car from which I was addressing the meeting, and they reluctantly did so. I said—

"I want the Government reporter to listen to me; I want the Government to hear what Dr. Tanner and myself have to say to you."

I was allowed to proceed no further, because, at this stage of the proceedings, the police came into this peaceable meeting, which was convened for a lawful purpose, and which was being conducted in a lawful and law-abiding manner—they came in, and I will relate what followed—

"Almost at the same moment, District-Inspector Milling arrived, with as large a detachment of his braves as could be drawn off their beats at short notice. Upwards of 100 police were present."

That was found not to be the fact, for there were only 30 or 40 police there. I remained standing on the steps of the car, when I was approached by Inspector Milling. He having spoken to me, I asked for his authority. He said he had no authority, and he immediately gave orders to the police who were with him to break up and disperse the meeting. Now, Sir, I will trouble the Committee by reading a few lines from *The Cork Herald* of that date, in order to enlighten the Committee as to the brutal manner in which the crowd was broken up—

"The crowd was taken completely by surprise, and it is not to be wondered at that, unarmed as they were, the bayonets and batons of the police ruffians were effectual in scattering them on all sides. The conduct of these men, to whom it has been the custom to attribute at least a small measure of sympathy for their fellow-countrymen, though continuing under their dark tunic, was cruel in the extreme. They slashed and cut on all sides in a most indiscriminate fashion, as if they took delight in inflicting injury on unoffending people."

This description goes on to point out that the gleam of steel was observable—

"For the police did not disperse the meeting with batons only. Some of them used their batons, but others drew their swords and inflicted wounds of a most desperate character on the heads and the other parts of the bodies of the people. Their bayonets, too, were not idle, one unfortunate young man having got a thrust in the head, for which he was treated at the Infirmary. Their savagery passed all bounds, and the less the people seemed inclined

for resistance, the more inclined the police seemed to be to attack them."

I came in for a good deal of the battering myself. I went up to Mr. Milling, and asked him if he had authority to disperse the meeting, and he made me no reply. I pressed him for his authority, and the only answer I received was to be set upon by his brutal policemen, and only that I put my hands over my head, I would not be here to-night to tell the story. I was thrown to the ground, and kicked by these policemen. But, Sir, I will not depend alone on the statement of this newspaper I have quoted, for the description of this terrible onslaught on the part of the police. I will give you the description of a bystander. He says—

"If there had been any notice given of the proceedings it would have been perhaps a modification of the offence, but there was no intimation given. Even when the crowd had entirely dispersed, any stray on-looker who presented himself within view was pounced on by several constables and beaten. I saw one man come to the Court-house on the eastern side, when four constables uttering loud curses set on him. 'Damn you, go on the wind,' said one, and the man was felled by a blow from a baton. He rose to his feet and rushed down St. George's Street, followed by three other policemen with drawn sabres. The reporters who were engaged in the peaceful performance of their duty were beaten. I was beaten myself with batons across the shoulders."

I will not depend even on this witness who signs himself "Spectator;" but I will give an account of the occurrence from the mouth of an Englishman—a commercial traveller who witnessed the affair from the beginning almost to the end. This gentleman voluntarily came into Court, so outraged was he in every generous English feeling. He voluntarily, as I say, came into Court, and delivered his evidence in the following fashion:—Frank Edward Martin, a commercial traveller, deposed in answer to Mr. Adams—

"I am an Englishman, and I arrived in Cork on the 1st December for commercial purposes. I followed the crowd to the Court-house, where some one commenced to address the people. I saw nothing at the time more than ordinary in a crowd in the street."

He was asked whether the crowd was such a one as would be expected to create terror and alarm, and he answered in the negative, although he said that there certainly was a slight jostling, but he said that in a minute he saw drawn bayonets and truncheons coming

on the heads of the people. The people, he went on to say, then ran away, and he himself executed a strategic movement to the rear. He declared that he saw no act to cause the police to charge, and that before they charged they gave no warning, that he heard, of their intention to do so. When asked if he should have heard the warning if one had been given, he replied that he must have heard it if it had been given, as he had heard the word of command given in England. This witness was a gentleman who had no connection with the city, beyond calling at houses of business there. He went out in the evening, probably to get a little fresh air, he was attracted to the Court-house by the crowd, and saw this wanton and brutal attack on the people by the police. He came to the Court to give evidence without being asked, and tendered his evidence in the fashion I have just described. I am sure that will go far towards convincing hon. Gentlemen opposite of the truth of the statement that I make that this meeting was most wantonly and brutally disturbed. I was about to trouble the House with other statements that would also go far with the House—the statements of hon. Members of this House—but I will not do so. I will trouble the House only with one statement, that of the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Cork. In an interview with a newspaper reporter, he said—

"While I was interviewing Milling, I saw the police make another rush at Mr. O'Connor and his friends. I saw Mr. O'Connor struck again by a policeman. Dr. Tanner caught the policeman who struck Mr. O'Connor, and said he would get his number. The man tried to get away from Dr. Tanner, and without a single word of warning or the smallest justification, a policeman gave Dr. Tanner two blows on the head, the second of which felled him to the ground."

He goes on to say—

"I went and raised Dr. Tanner from the ground, and found him bleeding from the head. The blood poured down his face. I never saw such ruffianism displayed by a policeman."

[*Laughter.*] I dare say this is very amusing to hon. tender-hearted Gentlemen—gallant Gentlemen—on the other side of the House, to find that two Members of this House, Representatives of the people—[*Laughter*—yes, Representatives of the people, who have a better right to claim that title than those who got into their present posi-

tions by very narrow majorities, and by the circulation very often of statements that were not strictly in accordance with the truth. Well, such was the meeting, such were its objects, and such was the manner in which it was disturbed. And what was the sequel to this disturbance of that meeting? Why, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) brought a charge against District Inspector Milling for assault—an unprovoked and unwarrantable assault, and a flagrant attack on the rights of the people. The case was brought into Court, it was laid bare in all its phases; it was investigated for a day or two, and what was the result? Why, that this man, this officer of police, who, according to his own statement in the Court, was in plain clothes and not on duty, and had no authority to disperse the meeting, was committed by the Cork bench of magistrates for trial. The Grand Jury, however, failed to send up a true Bill, and he is still unprosecuted. He has not yet been made amenable to the law that he has broken, though a *prima facie* case has been made out against him, and he has been returned for trial by the magistrates. What transpired on that investigation? Why that all the statements that I have made were proved to be true, not only on the sworn evidence of our witnesses, but also on the sworn evidence of the police themselves, who went into Court, and were obliged to admit the truth of every allegation that was made against them. Well, another case was brought on for investigation soon afterwards. A similar case was tried before a bench of magistrates. District Inspector Milling brought a charge against the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) and myself. What was the result of that case? Why, a bench of magistrates—a different one to that which adjudicated on the other case—actually refused to have information sworn against the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork and myself. Here you have two benches of magistrates. The one bench send District Inspector Milling forward for trial, and the other actually refuse to have information sworn against us. This proves the truth of our contention that a lawful meeting, carried out in a law-abiding manner, was broken up most illegally and brutally by the

very policemen for whom we are now asked to Vote extra pay and rewards. I need not, I think, trouble the Committee by reading the evidence of District Inspector Milling himself, where he swore that he was in plain clothes, that he was not on duty that night, and that he had merely gathered up the beats that he could find, and proceeded to the meeting and dispersed it in an illegal manner. I may add for the information of the Committee, that he admitted, in cross-examination, that the Government reporter did not seem to be in danger. He admitted that I had taken him out of any apparent danger, that he was in the car with me, side by side with me, and that the crowd was not crushing him. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland to-night spoke about the intimidation of jurors. The object of our meeting was to protest against the intimidation of jurors. The jurors of Cork, those of them who were of a sufficiently independent mind to be kept out of the jury box, were told to “stand by,” and those who were put into the box were bull-dozed by Mr. O’Brien, and intimidated by every Judge who came to Cork. It was to protest against this state of things that we held our meeting. We wished to save the character of our city, that was being run down in consequence of proceedings like this. What has been the result of our agitation? Why that there was scarcely any fault to be found with the jury arrangements at the last Assizes. It was this, that even the Solicitor General for Ireland himself, except in two cases that occurred before my eyes, did not dare to have a jury in the box. It was this, that those who were brought to Cork from all parts of Munster, and even from Connaught, to be tried at the Winter Assizes got something like fair play. I will give an instance in which a young gentleman got something like fair play.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is now travelling entirely beyond the Vote.

MR. J. O’CONNOR: Well, I will leave that subject, Sir. I merely wished to point out the result of the agitation. The agitation has been amply justified, and I was about to prove it to the Committee, and to point out how erroneous it was for the police to interfere in the matter. However, I will merely say, as I have already pointed out, that our

meeting was perfectly lawful. The mode in which we conducted it could not be found fault with by any reasonable person. My hon. Friend the Member for Wexford (Mr. Redmond) pointed out by quoting the most reliable authority that can be referred to, that we had the right of public meeting. We were unquestionably within our right. We hold, Sir, and I believe that the English people are very strong on that point, that public meeting is the bulwark of the British Constitution, and that fair trial by jury is one of its gems. We hold that in exercising our right of public meeting and that in protesting that trial by jury should get fair play in Ireland, we were perfectly within our right. In doing this—in so protesting—we were interfered with by the police and their officers, or rather, by what is known as police, but which I would prefer to stigmatize simply as “organized ruffianism.” We were interfered with by that organized system in the exercise of our undoubted right. In consequence of this interference with our right I intend to move the reduction of this Vote by £1,000. This is a specific charge that I bring against the police authorities in Ireland and against the Government; and, in order to emphasize my protest against the manner in which the right of public meeting in Ireland is interfered with; in order to enter my protest against the manner in which hon. Members in this House have been outraged in the performance of what they conceive to be their duty, I beg to move that this Vote be reduced by the sum of £1,000—the expenses of the police force in Cork.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 “That the reduced sum, not exceeding £29,960, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service.”—(Mr. John O'Connor.)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): I should like, Sir, to say a few words on the Amendment, now that the hon. Gentleman has attacked, not the Government, but the police authorities of Cork. The hon. Gentleman has stated the case very plainly to the Committee. He has stated that he and his Friends took the opportunity of an approaching trial of a well-known character in the South of Ireland (Tim Hurley), at the assizes to be held on the

following day, to summon a public meeting, the evening before, at the Court-house, as the hon. Member said, to “influence” the Cork jurors. Now, what he calls “influence” I should call “intimidate.” That, and nothing else, was the object of the meeting, and that being so, the divisional magistrates and the police authorities in Cork were absolutely right in the step that they took in discharge of their duty. Naturally, meetings cannot be dispersed without the use of some force; and I dare say some persons got a few knocks with batons, and it served them perfectly right.

MR. JOHN O’CONNOR: I rise to Order, Mr. Courtney. I did not summon the meeting at all; nor did I try to influence the jurors. We merely went to meet Tim Hurley.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of replying.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: The hon. Gentleman has told the Committee so already; and, as to not influencing jurors, why, in every word he uttered he admitted that that was his object. He spoke of what he was pleased to call the unpopularity which he thought jurors had obtained in every case in Ireland. He spoke of how Cork merchants found themselves interfered with in their dealings on account of that unpopularity. I should say they have been Boycotted simply because the jurors in Cork gave verdicts according to their oaths. It was the object of the hon. Member (Mr. J. O’Connor), as he has told the Committee, to interfere with the action of the jurors in County Cork. Now, Sir, I consider that the meeting was properly dispersed by the police. I do not believe a word of the stories of the excessive violence of the police. I believe the police did their duty and nothing more; and I warn the hon. Member, and others who act in the same way in Ireland, that if something worse than raps of batons result from such proceedings on their part they are the people who will have to take the responsibility. [*Cries of “Go and lead the police, then!” and “That is your policy!”*]

MR. T. P. O’CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): That is a threat.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is a threat to murder.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Well, Sir, it is no threat.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is a threat to murder. [*A pause.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must ask the hon. Member for Liverpool to withdraw that expression.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I do not know what observation. The only observation I made was that "That is a threat."

THE CHAIRMAN: I meant the hon. Member who said "That is a threat to murder."

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I did not make use of any such expression. [*Cries of "Healy!"*]

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for North Longford, then. [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*]

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Do not do anything of the kind.

MR. T. M. HEALY and Mr. PARNELL, rising together,

MR. PARNELL (Cork): On a point of Order, Mr. Courtney, I wish to ask you, Sir, whether you derived your information with regard to the hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) from your own hearing and knowledge, or from the information of hon. Members below the Gangway on the Conservative side of the House?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member knows very well that is not a point of Order. I heard the voice of the hon. Member (Mr. T. M. Healy); but I had forgotten at the time for what constituency he sat. I must ask the hon. Member for North Longford to withdraw that observation.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Mr. Courtney, my respect for the fairness with which you always conduct these proceedings at once induces me to withdraw the observation.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: What I was saying—

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I rise to Order. The right hon. Gentleman in the observations he made before you called myself and my hon. Friend the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) to Order, used what I regard as a threat against Members of this House. To be more precise, Mr. Courtney, I will give you my recollection of the threat he employed. He said that in certain eventualities, certain members of this

House would not be struck with batons, but with something worse.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I heard the right hon. Baronet say that if, under certain circumstances certain persons were struck with something more serious than batons, the responsibility would be on themselves.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH rose, whereupon—

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I rise to Order.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no point of Order.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*] I have nothing to withdraw.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: You have threatened Members of this House.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I did not threaten Members of this House.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Yes, you did.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool to exercise some self-control.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have warned hon. Members what will be the result of their proceedings if they are carried on in the same spirit. I have said that they might result in something more serious than blows from batons. I may remind hon. Members of what happened the other day. I had to answer a question as to the conduct of police at evictions at Leitrim, where, owing to the action of the people there, excited as I believe by speeches made by hon. Members of this House, the police had actually to fire upon the crowds, causing wounds, but fortunately nothing worse. The result of that was that the crowds dispersed, and that the law was carried out. As a further result, the Sheriff asked for the services of a great force of police to assist him in evictions in the same neighbourhood. The first evictions having been successfully carried out, in spite of the incitement to resistance made by certain persons—I do not know who—[*"Where?"*] In Leitrim. [Mr. DILLON: Nine of us were in County Leitrim at the time.] In spite of the incitement made, and these evictions having been successfully carried out, word was sent to the police to-day by the Sheriff that he did not require any force to carry out further

evictions, because the tenants had come in and paid their rents. Now, Sir, all I have to say is this—that whether it be with batons, or in whatever way it be, the law must be enforced. With reference to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor), I just wish to remind the Committee that not one single word of his speech, nor of his Amendment, has the slightest relation to the Vote which is before the Committee. This is a Vote for extra pay and conveyance of the police on the occasions, amongst others, of those evictions where the police have been summoned together from great distances to form a protecting force for the Sheriff. The matter to which the hon. Member alluded was the dispersal by the police of a meeting in the City of Cork itself, and in respect of which there was not a single penny expended in extra pay. It was not my business to interrupt the hon. Member in his speech; but I may say, now, it is to be regretted that the hon. Gentleman should have wasted the time of the Committee by referring to a subject in regard to which I believe not one single penny is included in the Vote.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) could have been here when I began my statement, or else he would have known that, to put myself in Order, I stated that the dispersal of the meeting was carried out by extra police who were brought into the City of Cork for the purpose of doing the work. They were there in every respect connected with the agrarian movement. The force employed was not the City force; indeed, in their interviews and conversations with the citizens of Cork for weeks afterwards, the City Police were continually impressing upon the citizens the fact that they were not at the meeting at all. Again, Sir, I have to protest against the perversion of my statement. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) says that I called the meeting to influence the jurors. In the first place, I called no meeting, and I said so; but I took the opportunity, on the arrival of Tim Hurley, to protest against the jury packing. That is an entirely different thing to influencing the jurors. I did not call the meeting, and my language was carefully guarded; and, in order to

set myself right with the House, I have read the language I used. I merely asked for fair play, for trial by jury—I asked for the benefit of the British Constitution. Surely, in doing what I did I ought to have the praise, and not the blame, of the Government of England.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) rose to address the House, but was received with cries of "Divide, divide!" and much interruption.

MR. PARNELL: You have not got the *clôture* yet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not sure, Mr. Courtney, whether I shall be doing a kindness to hon. Members opposite if I remind them that, at the present moment, the New Rules of Procedure have not been passed, and that it does not follow, because there has been a universal silence on that side of the House so far as this debate is concerned—[*Cries of "Divide!"*—it does not follow, because there has been almost universal silence on that side of the House—[*Renewed interruption.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It does not follow that, because there has been almost universal silence on that side of the House, and that the arguments from this side have been as yet unanswered, there is no occasion for debate on the subject. It is true that the amount of this Vote is not a large one, and, looked at from one point of view, the time of the Committee has been spent, perhaps, to very small advantage in pursuing the discussion so far. But, Mr. Courtney, when we look at the purposes for which this money is to be voted, then even the small sum of £30,000 assumes rather an infinitely more serious aspect. There are many new Members in this House on both sides, and to many of them it may appear that a small Supplementary Vote of £30,000 might be passed in silence; but older Members may remember that upon the main Vote for the Irish Constabulary, amounting to £1,500,000, there was a general protest from all parts of the House against so enormous an expenditure. We are now, to-night, voting an increase upon that original sum of £1,500,000. Mr. Courtney, there are many Members of this House—[*Cries of "Divide!"*] Mr. Courtney, if I am not allowed to proceed, I shall be under the necessity of moving that you do report Progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If I am allowed to proceed, I want to draw the attention of the Committee to the different heads of the Vote. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), in the explanation which he made in the earlier part of the evening, made a reference to the Belfast riots. That reference was a very short one. The right hon. Gentleman did not go beyond the first step to explain that a large portion of the Vote was for the Belfast riots. Surely, the right hon. Gentleman might have given us some additional information as to the way in which the money was spent, and the necessity for the expenditure, and as to his own opinion of the proceedings in Belfast. He might have indicated, too, the wealth of the inhabitants of that city who have given so much countenance to the spirit of riot in the North of Ireland, and that they ought to have been made responsible for this expenditure rather than that it should have been levied upon the general taxpayers of the country. I am sorry the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) has moved to reduce this Vote by the sum of £1,000. I think the whole sum might have been objected to, so far as it is an additional charge placed upon the general taxation of the country; and I, for my part, shall not hesitate to give not only my vote, but my voice emphatically against this extra taxation. Where is this expenditure to stop? It was observed that when we had got a force in Ireland costing the country £1,000,000 sterling, we had a force, supplemented by the military, ample for all purposes of maintaining what is called law and order. To-night, the Government have through the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) confessed that all this machinery is insufficient for the purpose of maintaining law and order; and they have announced that it is their intention very shortly, or after they have obtained the passage of the rigid Rule of Closure, to ask for additional powers for the government of Ireland. If that be so, it is useless to grant this additional sum, and the sooner a protest is made the better. The right hon. Gentleman, in commenting upon the action of the hon. Member for Tipperary and others who took part in

the Cork and other meetings, said that the intention of those Gentlemen and the object of the meeting was to intimidate the jurors. If similar steps had been taken to pack juries in England, in the same way that Irish juries are packed, all your police — [*Cries of "Divide, divide!"*] Mr. Courtney, as I am not allowed to proceed, I beg to move that you do now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Illingworth.*)

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I beg to say, Mr. Courtney, that I intend to vote for this Motion, and my reason is the repeated interruptions by which the speeches of the hon. Member (Mr. Illingworth) and other hon. Gentlemen have been met by a number of Members who have recently come into the House. I may add that any further Motion of the same kind which is elicited by the same course of conduct will have my support.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am sure the Committee will feel it is quite impossible that we can consent to report Progress at this time of the night (12.10). Great interest has been shown in this debate, and the Committee will, no doubt, listen to the few observations the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Illingworth) has to make; but we must ask the Committee to give a Vote with as little delay as possible.

MR. PARNELL: I am very glad, Sir, that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Smith) has thought it necessary to rebuke his disorderly Followers. It is not the habit of the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) to speak at length upon the Irish, or any other question, and I certainly think that the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite might have waited until the hon. Member had finished his speech before they selected him as a mark for their disorderly interruptions. However, as hon. Gentlemen opposite have now received a rebuke from their Leader, I hope the future conduct of those Gentlemen will not render it necessary for the hon. Member for Bradford to persevere with his Motion for Progress.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I beg to withdraw the Motion, on the understanding that hon. Gentleman above the Gang-

way opposite will accede to the appeal made to them by their Leader.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Question proposed, "That the reduced sum of £29,960 be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Courtney, when I was interrupted by hon. Gentlemen opposite, I was observing, in reply to what the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said, that it was a deliberate attempt to influence juries. Now, Sir, I venture to submit to the Committee that if the same system of packing juries existed in England as has prevailed sadly too long in Ireland, not only all the police in England, but all the military as well, would be insufficient to prevent the people of this country from attending public meetings, and upsetting not only the juries thus set up, but also the Government which defended them. Now, Mr. Courtney, it is not denied by the Government that there has been less disorder in Ireland during the last few months than has been the case for years. Under these circumstances we are entitled to ask how it is that all this money has been spent. The secret of the whole matter is, that the Government has countenanced a system of jury-packing against which any people who desire any form of Constitutional freedom are called upon to protest. Sir, for my part, I protest against the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, and I venture, humble Member of this House as I am, to give the right hon. Gentleman a warning. Pointing to the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. John O'Connor), who had told the Committee that he had himself felt the blows of the batons of these ruthless police, the right hon. Gentleman said the hon. Member must look for not only blows from batons, but for something more serious. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman afterwards put the threat in a milder form; but I would say that no Member of this House, no Minister of the Crown who has such responsible duties to discharge as the right hon. Gentleman has, ought to take up such an attitude as he has adopted, and to make use of such covert threats to Members of the House, or to anybody else. It is evident that a spirit is developing which bodes no good for freedom of debate in this House; but, as long as we are entitled to speak, I wish

to say—and I believe that I am speaking for many Members both above and below the Gangway—that we have abandoned all faith in this system of coercion, whether it be carried out by the police or by the military, and that, therefore, we are called upon consistently to oppose the Vote, and all Votes of a like character, intended to maintain, not Constitutionalism in Ireland, but the spirit of tyranny which the Irish Members, assisted by a large number of Members of this House, as I believe they will soon be by the great body of the British people, are desirous to overthrow. We have only to ask whether Ireland is receiving the same treatment as that which is accorded to the rest of the Empire. Gentlemen opposite tell us it is. Well, I wish to see some evidence of it. Unfortunately, we see accumulating proof in every direction that the very opposite spirit is prevalent in the counsels of the Government. There was a melancholy exhibition of this spirit a short time ago. When the hon. Member for Tipperary was referring to his own experience at the hands of the police, and to the experience of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), there was upon the faces of the Law Officers of the Government evidence of the most ill-timed hilarity. Surely, under such circumstances, a certain amount of gravity would have better become the most responsible positions of those Gentlemen. I think that the unseemly manner in which they exhibited their feelings to the House was an unfortunate indication of the spirit in which they would approach their duties as Law Officers of the Crown. I confess myself grieved at the display of such a spirit from such a quarter.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Mr. Courtney, I do not think any time should be lost, on the part of the Irish Members, in taking notice of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. You, Sir, for the first time since you have been in the Chair, thought it right to call me to Order, and I submitted to your ruling with that deference which is always due to the unfaltering courtesy and constant fairness which you always exhibit. But when the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland rises in this House, shakes his hand in the face of the Irish Members, and with a face and a voice distorted by passion, and, in such close connection

with words addressed to an hon. Member, uses threats as to proceedings in Ireland, I think I have some excuse for losing my self-control. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman had the grace to withdraw the first part of his remarks, in which he was answered by the statement of my hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary. That statement was, that my hon. Friend, taking part in a meeting in Cork, was attacked by the police with batons; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary immediately proceeded to say that my hon. Friend fully deserved what he got; and immediately added that if hon. Members were to take part in like proceedings they would have something worse than batons to deal with. ["No, no!"] Now, Mr. Courtney, that was the statement as I understood it; that was the statement as it was understood by hon. Members around me; that was the statement as it was understood by hon. Members above the Gangway opposite. It may not be the statement as it was understood on the opposite side below the Gangway, because hon. Gentlemen there have been so busy in attempting to interrupt the proceedings of the Committee that they may be forgiven for a somewhat misleading recollection of the proceedings. But supposing that the right hon. Gentleman did not mean to use the threat against us. He may have meant it or not, that is his affair. We are quite able to meet any threats he may make. But if we adopt the gloze which the right hon. Gentleman put upon it when, by resuming his seat upon a point of Order raised by one of my hon. Friends, he was able to collect his scattered senses—if it be not a threat against the Irish Members, it is a threat of bayonets and bullets against the Irish people. What does that mean? It means that the right hon. Gentleman—one of the Leaders of the Unionist Party—tells the people of Ireland that it is his intention to mow them down with bullets and bayonets. And for doing what? For defending their hearths and their homes, and their farms against rents the injustice of which has been denounced by his own Royal Commission. And that is the message of peace which the present Government has to substitute for that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I tell the right hon.

Gentleman that he may exasperate the Irish people; but that better men than he have failed to terrorize them. We have had to deal with a real Cromwell. Mantalanis, masquerading as Cromwells, will not frighten us.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like, Mr. Courtney, to make a remark with reference to the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman has proceeded entirely on the assumption that the police will act in a certain manner, altogether apart from the question whether they have the least ground for their proceedings or not. I would like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) whether he accepts the doctrine which his right hon. Colleague the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has laid down with regard to the action of police at meetings in Ireland? The interpretation I place upon the right hon. Gentleman's language is that if the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, or any military gentleman of that description, issued a Proclamation declaring that, in his opinion, an illegal assembly was taking place, it would be the duty of the police to disperse it at all hazards. Now, is that the law?—because the principle which the Government are proceeding on has been repudiated over and over again by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). The last occasion on which he repudiated it was in reference to the Orange riots at Cleator Moor. The Orangemen went into Cleator Moor with banners and guns and pikes, and an information was sworn that there was going to be an illegal assembly which might lead to a breach of the peace. In the pages of *Hansard*, of the 15th of July, 1884, the extraordinary proceedings which took place there are described. Questions were asked of the then Home Secretary as to whether it was his intention to proclaim the meeting. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) stated, in reply, that on the 13th of December, 1867, the following message was sent from the Home Office to the Clerk of the County Justices, Liverpool:—

"Issue proclamations similar to that by the borough; collect county police; ask assistance of borough police; swear in special constables; give notice to military authorities; apply to

Orange leaders to stop their meeting and procession; apply to Roman Catholic clergy to dissuade the people; do everything in your power to prevent a collision and breach of the peace; to do this you are justified in preventing meetings and stopping processions; let the people know that they are stopped on these grounds. Magistrates are not to be bound by this, but must exercise their own discretion, depending on locality where a meeting is held and numbers attending, force they have at their disposal, and other elements that cannot be known to the Secretary of State. Note—This telegram was sent after a personal consultation with Sir John Karslake, who attended at the Home Office and settled it."

Now, Sir, that was what was said in 1867. What was the law as interpreted by the late Home Secretary the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby in 1884? He was asked by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), as to why, that being the state of the law, the Government did not interfere with the Orangemen at Cleator Moor? What did the right hon. Gentleman say? He said—

"The series of Questions put by the hon. Member is founded entirely on a misapprehension of the province of the Executive Government in such matters. In England, the Executive Government is not the conservator of the peace. The conservation of the peace is entrusted to the magistrates in the different localities for which they have jurisdiction. They are the conservators of the peace, and the Executive Government and the Secretary of State have no authority to give any orders whatever to the magistrates in this matter. The Government and the Home Secretary have no authority over the local police either in the counties or in the boroughs. That is a fundamental proposition which seems sometimes not to be understood."

The right hon. Gentleman added—

"The ground upon which we acted seemed to me to be a reasonable ground. It was this—that it is easier to prevent processions from forming than to deal with an excited mob after a collision has occurred. That was the principle on which we advised the magistrates, and on which they acted, and with the best effect. It was adopted with the advice of the English and of the Scotch Law Officers of the Crown, and it prevented collisions in a number of cases in Liverpool and Glasgow in connection with Orange processions; and it was also useful in preventing disturbances arising out of the proceedings of the Salvation Army. But, unfortunately, the doctrine on which it was based was challenged. In a particular case, the magistrates ordered that a meeting should not be held, on the ground that information had been sworn that there was danger of a breach of the peace; and the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court declared that the magistrates had no authority to stop a meeting in these circumstances. Consequently it was not possible to

tender the same advice to the magistrates in these matters."

The right hon. Gentleman also said—

"Therefore, I say, since that decision the power to stop processions on these grounds seemed to be put an end to, and they could not be prohibited; and then the question arose, what are the magistrates to do?"

Now, Sir, that is reported in *Hansard* of July 15, 1884; vol. ccxc., pp. 1119-20-21-22. I should like to know if, in face of that opinion, the Government propose to stop meetings in Ireland, under what power they intend to act? When the Liberal Government stopped meetings, they first obtained statutory power, under the Crimes Act, to do so. If statutory power was needed by the Liberal Government, why do not the Conservative Government want it? If, in 1884, it was necessary to have a special clause in the Crimes Act to enable the Government of that day to put a stop to meetings in Ireland, I would like to ask from whence do the present Government obtain authority to stop meetings? Let me tell the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary plainly what will happen. I tell him this—and I say it advisedly—that if policemen come to disturb a meeting and fire on it, the people, if they have weapons, will be fully entitled to use them against the disturbers of the meeting. And when these threats are used by the Government, let them beware of the effect of them upon the Irish people. At present, the people are going unarmed to their meetings. Now, there are a number of domestic utensils and agricultural implements which it is quite likely, if the people believe that illegal action is being perpetrated against them, they will think they have a right to apply against the police. And when the people know that the Orange Party in Ireland were advised to go to public meetings with what were called their "sweethearts," when they know that noble Lords, brothers of Cabinet Ministers, sons of Lords Lieutenant, signed Proclamations advising the Orangemen to go armed to their meetings, because they were being illegally proclaimed; it is quite likely that the Irish people may take it into their heads that that which is lawful and proper for the Orange Body to do may be lawful and proper for them to do. I hope the Irish people will take no such course, unless

the proceedings threatened by the Government are carried out. But if in the dispersal of any meeting you shoot down one single man, I tell you, take the consequences. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary no doubt finds it very easy, in the calmness of the Irish Office, to give his orders. He is thinking not of the Irish people, but of the effect of his language on the English constituencies, and of what will benefit his miserable Party. He is thinking, "Will a little bloodshed in Ireland cement the Liberal alliance?" [*Cries of "Shame" and "Order!"*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is going beyond the limits of Parliamentary debate.

MR. CONYBEARE: I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. The Speaker has ruled that the expression "Shame" is out of Order. I ask you whether you caught that expression?

THE CHAIRMAN: Very likely; it is out of Order. Mr. Healy.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should regret it, Sir, if any interpretation I have put on the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary should incur the censure of the Chair. [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite, who say "Withdraw" had better remove the Chairman and get into the Chair themselves.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Withdraw.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman opposite interrupts me. The right hon. Gentleman left a certain Government, I believe. The right hon. Gentleman was not included in the next Government. I do not think that if there were a vacancy in the Chair the right hon. Gentleman would get the appointment. The question I rose to ask the Government was this—

MR. CHAPLIN: Mr. Courtney, I wish to ask you, as a point of Order, whether you did not call the attention of the hon. and learned Member to the fact that the expressions he made use of went beyond Parliamentary license, and whether, under these circumstances, the hon. and learned Gentleman is not bound to withdraw them.

THE CHAIRMAN: I said as much to the hon. and learned Member, and he expressed regret for having used them.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman is making a bad beginning in Chairmanship. Well, Mr. Courtney, I ask the Government whether they are prepared to say that there is a law in Ireland different from the law existing in England as to the right of putting down public meetings. The Irish people know that these meetings cannot be put down, and that the Liberal Government had to obtain statutory powers in order to put them down. Why, Sir, if the Government are right in putting down these meetings, how is it that they do not arrest and prosecute every person taking a part in them. If the Government have power to issue proclamations of meetings, it follows that every person acting in breach of those proclamations is acting illegally. Why do they not prosecute my hon. Friends who take part in such meetings? If they are illegal everybody who attends them ought to be prosecuted. What are called "the poor dupes" ought to be prosecuted. It appears that there are 5,000,000 of dupes in Ireland. Everyone in Ireland is a dupe, I believe, unless he is an Orange Lord. Why, I ask, do not the Government give effect to their belief in the legality of their action? I think that the indisposition from which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said he was unhappily suffering must have rather got into his head to-night. I make that suggestion as an explanation of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, because nobody boasted more than he did of his desire to carry out—

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): I rise to Order. The hon. and learned Member — [*Ironical cheers from the Home Rule Benches.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Mr. Gedge.

MR. GEDGE: The hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), who sits opposite to us, perpetually interrupts us; and during the last minute he called out, "Order below the Bar—the Criterion bar!" I ask you, Mr. Courtney, whether that is in Order?

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no question of Order.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is somewhat difficult, Mr. Courtney, I will not say to follow the thread of one's remarks, but to have any thread in them at all, in

face of the persistent interruptions of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who, when they get up and address you, do not seem to know what they are interrupting about. What I have to ask the Government is this—and I would put my question rather to the calm and logical mind of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), than to the excited mind of the Chief Secretary for Ireland—what I have to ask the Home Secretary is, whether he adheres to the declaration of the law made by his Predecessor in Office; and, if so, whether he will say that the law in England with respect to public meeting is different from the law in Ireland, the common law of both countries being presumably alike? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman says there is any difference, I would ask him, where it is to be found, and of what it consists? This is a question which, I think, admits of an easy and satisfactory answer. The Government declare that they are entitled by law to put down meetings in Ireland. We say they are not, and we ask them to point to a single judicial decision which, in the least, supports their contention that they have the right to proclaim meetings, or to prosecute anybody attending them. Why, if they had a right to put down these meetings, would they not proceed against those who attended them? It makes it all the more horrible to have threats used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary against the Irish people, when the illegality is altogether on his side. The right hon. Gentleman, in my opinion, has entirely lost control over his feelings on this occasion. I have attributed the fact to physical causes. [*Cries of "Question!"*] That explanation does not seem to be satisfactory to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite. Of course, if it is not due to physical conditions, I never could attribute it to mental conditions. But whether it be due to physical or mental causes, the Government have made to-night a statement of the most serious gravity, which cannot fail to have a far-reaching effect upon what they describe as law and order in Ireland. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite—some of whom are neophytes—seem to suppose that we have not been subjected to this kind of thing before. I remember very well exactly similar speeches being made

by an Irish Secretary under similar conditions, whether mental or bodily I will not specify. Our constant experience is that the excitement which we now see below the Gangway opposite is never kept up for any lengthened period, and, after a few years, hon. Members who have been so enthusiastic in cheering their Chief Secretary for Ireland are quite willing to leave him in the lurch and in the mud. Now, Sir, the present Chief Secretary cannot be expected to make the experience of any previous Chief Secretary his own experience; but, at all events, he must be aware that in any course he may feel called upon to take in regard to putting down rightful meetings in Ireland, he is certain to meet with a speedy retribution. The right hon. Gentleman is not supported now as other Chief Secretaries, who have preceded him, were supported by a homogeneous Party. On the contrary, he is supported by a Party many of whom do not agree on the policy that should be adopted towards Ireland, and others of whom would only be too anxious to fly at his throat, the moment they found out his mistakes were such as would enable the Liberal Party to be restored on the ruins of its Predecessor. I submit, Sir, that when we find the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary using, as he has done in the course of this debate, language of the extraordinary nature which we, on these Benches, attribute to him—we may be wrong—in initiating a policy of the kind he has indicated, he has opened up a line of debate in which we sitting here have a right to enter. We say that, seeing the right hon. Gentleman has said to Members of this House—"You have already been attacked by the baton; but there are other weapons, which are much more far reaching, and which may be fatal to you next time," he has introduced considerations which we think fully warrant us in prolonging this debate until we can obtain from him or some other Member of the Government language of greater clearness indicative of what is the exact policy the right hon. Gentleman intends to carry out. The policy announced by the right hon. Gentleman to-night is a policy which I presume is not entirely his own. I should like to ask the very pacific First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) whether he approves of the policy of his Colleague, which we

Irish Representatives regard as a policy of bloodshed. It may not have been so intended by the Government; but I would ask, in reference to the mere shred of legality which is assumed on the basis of the Viceregal Proclamation—the legality of which we impugn—would hon. Gentlemen sitting below the Gangway allow men in England, under a similar state of the law, to be shot down, or threatened to be bayoneted, without admitting the responsibility attaching to such a course? Admitting that the late Liberal Government did proclaim a number of public meetings, they did so under statutory authority; while in England it has been judicially declared that the Government have not the power to put down an Orange meeting with bands of music and people firing shots from firearms. If that is the state of the law in regard to England, I ask is it not unfair to us to say that you will use the law, as you threatened to do in Ireland, until it has been clearly defined judicially or statutorily? What we say is, that if any portion of the Irish population is shot down in consequence of the view announced by the Chief Secretary, any blood that may thus be spilt would be entirely upon the heads of Her Majesty's Government. I should very greatly deplore any consequences of this kind, because no matter how right the Irish people may be, and no matter how wrong the Government may be, the Irish people are always placed in the wrong by the English newspapers. Whatever happens, the English newspapers invariably misrepresent them; and I think it would be almost better for the people to put up with wrong or illegality than that the Government should have the chance of misrepresenting the course they may take in Ireland. At the same time, my mind cannot but be moved by considerations which I believe influence the Irish people. It may be that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was a merely harmless threat; and, if that were so, it certainly was a most unfortunate and unhappy course for the right hon. Gentleman to have taken. But if what he said was seriously intended, then I say it may be followed by the most serious consequences. People in Ireland will believe the statement made by the Chief Secretary, and in the state of the law laid

down in regard to England; and they will think they have a perfect right to meet in public assembly, and, in so doing, to resist the police, whether they are in uniform or not, should they attempt to disperse them. That, at any rate, will be their belief. That belief has not yet been tested in a Court of Law, and I, for one, hope it will not be tested in a Coroner's Court, which, undoubtedly, is the Court to which the Chief Secretary would seem to appeal. I would say that no more cold-blooded incitement to a course which, at the best, is in all probability one of the greatest illegality, was ever addressed by an Irish official to an armed body like the Irish Constabulary. The Irish police go to these public meetings with arms in their hands, and often arrive there after long marches through the country, some of them probably being very tired and fatigued, having stopped for refreshment at the only place where they can get it—the nearest public-house. To-morrow morning you will have these men all over the country reading in the newspapers that an Irish Member was told in this House by the Chief Secretary for Ireland—"The next time you do such-and-such a thing, it is not batons you will get, but buckshot." That, in the opinion of the generality of Irish police constables, will be a mandate from his superior officer to commit bloodshed—I might say murder; but you, Sir, have ruled that it is out of Order to say in this House that an hon. or right hon. Gentleman's statement is an incitement to murder, although it has not been ruled out of Order to offer an incitement to murder. In fact, it seems to come to this—that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is entitled to use language which we say is calculated to foment disorder in Ireland, or lead to illegal procedure on the part of the police; and we, on these Benches, are not entitled to characterize such a course by the only language that can fitly be applied to it. This is a matter we cannot but deplore; and I would advise the right hon. Gentleman in future, when he has a policy to lay down in this House, to endeavour to lay it down in language that will not be open to the terrible misinterpretation which, on the present occasion, has been attached to his words. Certainly, the language the Chief Secretary has employed is not the

sort of language which ought to be used in this House. If the First Lord of the Treasury were to say to the humblest Member of the House, speaking of something that may have occurred in Yorkshire—"You have had batons already, but you will have guns next," the whole House would rise up against such a statement. Why, then, is a different tone to that which would be adopted towards English Members to be resorted to in the case of the Irish Representatives? The very fact that the right hon. Gentleman himself is not an Irishman, that he is not of our blood, and race, and religion, ought to make him more scrupulous in dealing with the Irish Members. He dare not, in fact, address to English Members language he has not scrupled to address to the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor). I challenge the right hon. Gentleman to tell any English Member "that if he has been batoned already, something worse will happen next time." The Committee ought to remember what it was that happened in this case. The hon. Member for Mid-Cork (Dr. Tanner) received a blow on the head, and was also kicked, and the policeman who kicked and beat him was returned for trial for the assault; but the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland refused to send up an indictment to the Grand Jury. That having been done, and my hon. Friend (Mr. J. O'Connor) having complained of an illegality of this character, the Chief Secretary for Ireland not only justifies it, but says that no matter how illegally the policeman acted, "the next time anything of the sort happens, instead of using a baton, he may use a gun." That is the only interpretation to be placed on the language used by the right hon. Gentleman. If the right hon. Gentleman denies it, let him get up at the Table and repudiate it.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do repudiate it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Well, then, what did you mean? The right hon. Gentleman has stated what he did not mean; will he tell us what it is he did mean? The words which fell from him seem to me to be very extraordinary, especially in view of all the circumstances existing in Ireland at the present time. In that country you have 12,000 policemen, and every policeman

in Ireland is a politician; he takes his orders not merely from his superior officers, but also from the tone taken by the political Leaders of the Government. Those men will all read the remarks made by the Chief Secretary for Ireland to-morrow morning; and they will put upon his language the interpretation we have placed upon it—namely, that in future not only are they to use the baton, in circumstances that may be legal or illegal, but, in addition to that, they are to do something that is worse. The right hon. Gentleman is the head of the police; will he now tell us, if that is not his meaning, what his meaning really is? Will he say that, pending the elucidation of the law on that subject by the Irish Courts, he will suspend these Proclamations; because, if he will do this, we can, by taking action against a police officer or superintendent for nominal assault, test the question as to whether the Government Proclamation was legal or illegal. But, in the meantime, we are governed by English law, and while that is so, it is a monstrous thing for any official in the position of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant to issue what I can only call a blood mandate to his police.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Sir, I should not have intervened in this debate at all, and should not have attempted to detain the Committee from the Division about to be taken, but for the fact that, in the course of this debate, one of the Leaders of the Party opposite, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, made a statement of considerable gravity, and I have felt that, in consequence of that statement, it is perfectly right that I, as an English Member, should offer a few remarks. At the present time, it is surely remarkably necessary that the Government of this country should be very careful of the language they use in speaking about Ireland; and particularly careful to confine themselves in their promises of action with reference to that country within the strict bounds of legality. The illegality of their interference in the manner of proceeding with regard to public meetings in Ireland rests, not on the assertion of my right hon. Friend the late Home Secretary, but on the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench. I have risen simply on this account, that I think it my

duty, on behalf of that constituency which I represent, as well as that of hon. Members who sit beside me, not to allow the only Members who protest against the language used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to be the Irish Representatives, because we stand solidly beside the Irish Members; we suffer where they suffer; the course of law in this country suffers by the violation of the law in Ireland; and I do not think that that portion of the people whom we on these Benches represent will endure that Ireland shall be made a Poland of.

MR. McLAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I rise to express, as an English Member who is in no way indebted to the Irish Members, my concurrence with what has just fallen from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hoxton (Mr. Stuart), who has just sat down—namely, that, after such a speech as has been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, it is not right that all the comments on that declaration should come from the Irish Members. The English Members are as much interested in justice as any other body of Representatives can possibly be; and when we hear a speech made from the Government Bench that can only bear the interpretation which has been put on it by hon. Members below the Gangway, I think we are entitled to protest against it. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] I desire to make an appeal to hon. Members opposite, who interrupt me, before they compel me to move that the Chairman report Progress. I would ask them this—Why is it that, while they will listen to Irish Members on this subject, when myself or any other English Member gets up, they endeavour to shout us down? When the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) rose to address the Committee, they tried to shout him down; they applied the same treatment to the hon. Member for Hoxton (Mr. Stuart); and now they are applying it to me. If English Members who rise to speak in this debate are to be treated like this, we may expect to go on sitting to any hour in the morning. I may say that, personally, I care nothing for these interruptions; but I hope that, if they are continued from those Benches, one Liberal Member after another will rise, until, before the Division is taken on

this Vote, every hon. Member on this side of the House will have spoken. It rests entirely with hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House whether I shall move to report Progress or not. Proceeding with the remarks I was about to make, I will only say that when the hon. Gentleman the Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) described the wounds that were inflicted on the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), I was very grieved to hear the cheers that came from the Tory Benches. I think, Sir, it is a very sad state of things that one side of the House should rejoice when it is stated that an hon. Member on the other side has been knocked down by the police at the time he is acting in the exercise of his rights as a citizen. That for which the hon. Gentleman was assaulted in Ireland was not an endeavour to intimidate jurors; what he desired to do was to protest against jury packing, which is an illegal act; and I say that if hon. Members of this House, who attend a public meeting to protest against an illegal act, are to be assaulted by the police, are to be knocked down and wounded by them, and hon. Gentlemen opposite are to jeer at such proceedings, it is a very sad state of things. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has said that those hon. Members deserved what they got. He said they had deserved the blows they received, and that in future they would get more than blows from policemen's batons, and they themselves would be responsible for it. I do not wonder at the interpretation put on those words by hon. Members below the Gangway. I am glad, however, that the right hon. Gentleman has repudiated the extreme interpretation put on his language; but, at the same time, a man is to be held responsible for the natural consequences of his acts, and also for the natural consequences of his words, and the natural interpretation, and most explicit interpretation, is that which hon. Members have put on the words used by the right hon. Gentleman. Those words will appear in all the Irish newspapers to-morrow, and it will be generally understood, both by the Irish and the English people, that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to resort to measures indicated by hon. Members below the Gangway. The Government may say that the responsibility will rest on the

Irish people; but the fact remains that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was an indication that the Government are not going to stop at the baton, but will resort to extreme measures where they deem it necessary. I do not know what those measures can mean, unless they mean firearms, after the batons are given up. Therefore, it is clear that when the Government has in contemplation the use of more extreme measures than batons, I think we are entitled to say they are contemplating a resort to bloodshed. It is, Sir, because of the disastrous use which may be made of that speech of the Chief Secretary, that I, as an English Member, protest against the language he has employed, and have risen to give an express refusal to be in any way implicated in it. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will see fit to modify his language, and let it be known that his Government does not intend to carry out a policy that will only exasperate the Irish people, and still further intensify the feeling with which they regard this country.

MR. DILLON: I think it would be impossible to exaggerate or aggravate the dangerous tendency of the speech made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. I must confess that the temper exhibited by hon. Members opposite in regard to this matter has completely taken me by surprise. Let us remember what took place to-night at the opening of this discussion. Having gone frequently over from London to Ireland, and been an eye-witness to scenes in which I myself have taken a part from Sunday to Sunday in that country, on occasions when a single blow struck must have resulted in the loss of 50 or 60, or perhaps 100 lives, I am astonished to find hon. Gentlemen opposite treating this subject as if it were a mere laughing matter. I have stated, and I repeat the statement, that I have come from places in which I have been in the thick of the fray myself, and where I have had a policeman's baton playing about my head. ["Hear, hear!"] An hon. Member says Hear, hear; but I tell him that the day in which a bayonet is drawn upon one of us in Ireland, many a drop of blood will be spilt. Let me tell hon. Members that although they may laugh as they come down here in order to close this debate, nevertheless

when the Chief Secretary for Ireland gives us the bayonet, he will not have reason to laugh. The right hon. Gentleman knows, while sitting in his place and listening to what I say, that if the statement he has made—and his repudiation of which I deny—namely, that if we continue the proceedings we have described, something worse than batons will be used against us, the right hon. Gentleman knows full well that if he means to carry out that policy, and did not use his language to-night in an unguarded moment of excitement or anger, the prospect before him is such that it would be far better for him that he had never accepted his present office, and he will not only regret the day in which he did accept it, but will doubly repent the night on which he made that speech. I wish to ask hon. Members to think over what has occurred. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has said that the meetings suppressed in Ireland only numbered eight during the last four months. Up to last Christmas, with the exception of the meeting at Sligo, we had no great complaint to make. It is within the last three or four weeks that the worst phase of the Government policy has been entered on, a policy which has brought Government rule in Ireland to the verge of a dangerous and critical position. What have we heard from the right hon. Gentleman to-day? I asked him to explain to us on what law the Government relied on carrying out their policy. The people I represent believe and are fully convinced that it is the Government who are breaking the law, and not we; and, if tomorrow the police should attempt to break up a meeting, and the people should resist them, is it not the duty of the right hon. Gentleman, as the Governor of the country, to refer us to the law under which he is acting, in order that we may be able to instruct our people? I say, on his head be the blood and the guilt. [A VOICE: "On yours!"] Hon. Members who are ignorant, and who interrupt me, and who, in all probability, never took the trouble to read a line of Irish history or law, and who come down to this House to obey the orders of their Leaders, are unfit to take any part in the debates of this House, but confine their share in the discussion of great subjects like this to incoherent interruptions, which only serve to exhibit their

ignorance. But I ask a question, and I say I am entitled to an answer to it. I ask, has the Government in Ireland law under which they can put down public meetings: and, if so, where are we to find it? I have told the Chief Secretary of Ireland that we are convinced the law is on our side; I also said we meant to hold these meetings in spite of the right hon. Gentleman's Proclamations. What is the answer we get? We get no reference to the law; we get no information as to where we are to look for the law; but we do get an intimation that, if we go on exercising our legal right in Ireland until the law is altered, we shall get something worse than batons. Well, what is worse than batons? A man who uses words like these when he does not lay down what the law is, but only convinces certain Members of the House that in using the force he speaks of, he only does so to vindicate the law and not to break it, is pursuing a course the most deadly and most dangerous to the public peace of Ireland. I have seen the police wantonly attack the people and without provocation. An instance of that occurred at Rosserea, when I was present. A body of people, some 200 in number, perhaps, walked with me to my hotel. We were not intending to hold a meeting; our meeting had been held peaceably, and a number of men accompanied me to my hotel. The police, infuriated by the fact of a meeting having been held, hardly allowed me to enter the door of my hotel, when they charged among the crowd, and I heard the crack, crack, of the batons upon the skulls of the people, and some men felled to the ground. I declare to Heaven if I had had a revolver in my hand then, I would have used it.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): Mr. Courtney, I rise to Order, and draw your attention to the very unseemly interruptions of two noble Lords who shed lustre upon their Order—I mean the noble Lord the Member for North Tyrone (Lord Ernest Hamilton) and the noble Lord who sits for the Chippenham Division of Wiltshire (Lord Henry Bruce).

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Mr. Dillon will proceed.

MR. DILLON: I do not for a moment seek to justify, nor have I any intention to justify, such action on the part of any

Nationalist Leader in Ireland; but do you suppose we have no sense of wrong, do you suppose we have hearts of stone in our breasts, when we see our people smashed by policemen's batons, when we see old men, as I saw them at Rosserea, felled to the ground by policemen without a shadow of excuse, without a shadow of law. Yet, when we come to raise this question in the House, right hon. Gentlemen opposite do not think it worth while to answer my simple question, under what law do they act? These right hon. Gentlemen think they have reached that stage in the administration of affairs in Ireland when they can throw law aside; that they have reached that stage when policemen's batons, or something else, will do without law. I am sorry they should think so, and it will be a sad day when it has come to this. I can tell them they are not serving the cause of the Union by carrying on this course. Nothing is more calculated to disgust the people of Ireland with this House, nothing is more likely to lead them to despair of justice proceeding from it, and from those who administer the affairs of the country, than, on a question which may involve the lives of numbers of our people, to find that through the whole night occupants of the Front Bench sit silent. I say it is a policy that is disgraceful to the Administration of our country. All we can do is to protest against it, until the law is clearly laid down. Until we are convinced that the Government are not, as we believe them to be, breaking the law, in an important, a vital particular, when they proclaim these meetings, we shall continue to hold them responsible, deeply, terribly, as we feel the risk of doing so.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): At this hour I will not trouble the Committee beyond a few remarks. I think if the hon. Member who has just sat down had attended to the observations of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, early in the evening, he would not have asked under what law these meetings have been proclaimed. That was stated in his observations after the opening of this debate, and I can do little more than repeat the statement then made. Again I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the circumstances, and to say that there

has been no new departure in Ireland during the last few months in the policy of proclaiming meetings. The Government have not in any way altered the opinions they have expressed and the views they have always entertained; and, as a matter of fact, during the last five weeks only three meetings have been proclaimed, and during the last three months only eight. The law, if we could discuss it at full length, can be shown in the clearest way. The law is this—and I believe, if it were necessary or possible to argue it here as a legal question, it could easily be proved by authorities to which we could refer and on which we rely—that if a meeting is held for an unlawful object, or for an unlawful purpose, then that meeting is an unlawful assembly, and it is in the power of conservators of the peace—it is their right, it is their duty—to prevent that meeting taking place. Whether the Proclamation is issued by the local magistrates, or issued by the Lord Lieutenant, or by the Lords Justices, in that Proclamation the grounds for its issue are stated, and anyone can refer to them and see if those grounds are not sufficient.

An hon. MEMBER: Is that the law in England?

MR. HOLMES: It is precisely the same in England.

An hon. MEMBER: It is not the law of England!

MR. HOLMES: I may mention to the Committee that there is an easy way to test the legality of these things, because the Lord Lieutenant's Proclamation does not in itself constitute law. The Proclamation is addressed to those believed to be about to engage in an unlawful act; but if the Proclamation is not justified by law, if it interferes with any man where interference is not justified, that is a question that can be tested before the ordinary tribunal. What is the meaning, then, of speech after speech, of discussion after discussion, when not one single attempt has been made during the last few months for the purpose of ascertaining, before a competent tribunal, whether the Government were right or wrong in proclaiming a meeting? I have stated my view of the law, and we have Courts for the purpose of settling such questions, and if anyone objects to the action of the Government on the ground of illegality,

that question can be decided by the Court. If it were decided, we should not then have these references after references to Proclamations with which this House is wholly unable to deal, and general appeals to Members of the Committee that the Government have acted illegally. On each of the eight occasions when meetings have been proclaimed the subject was investigated as carefully as possible; and there is not the shadow of a doubt that these meetings had an unlawful object—they were unlawful assemblies, and it was the duty of the conservators of the police to prevent their being held.

MR. PARNELL: The right hon. Gentleman the Law Officer of the Crown, who has just spoken, and his Colleague who sits beside him on the Front Bench, have been repeatedly asked what is the law on this question—the Proclamation of meetings in Ireland—whether by magistrates or by the Lord Lieutenant, and where is this law to be found? Now, the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland has given us his version of the law. He says it is in the power of any conservators of the peace to suppress and disperse meetings called for an illegal purpose; and he leaves us to suppose that the conservators of the peace—that any conservator of the peace—is to be the judge as to whether this meeting has been called for an illegal purpose or not. This must follow from the statement of the Attorney General for Ireland. He says that these meetings have been suppressed under the law which enables, according to his opinion, any conservator of the peace to suppress a meeting; therefore, these meetings have been suppressed by conservators of the peace, who constitute themselves judges whether these meetings are called for an illegal purpose or not. Consequently, it follows that any police constable in Ireland can constitute himself a judge as to the legality or illegality of a meeting, and use his weapons to suppress that meeting. The brother Law Officer of the Attorney General shakes his head. We want elucidation; we want to know not only what is his opinion of the law, but where he finds that law? The Attorney General spoke of authorities; but he did not give us any authority; he did not cite a single case, or quote a single authority on which he relies.

Why not? Has he any authority to give us? Does he know that after the suppression of a meeting in the North of Ireland, in 1881, by the magistrates there, an action was brought against the Crown in Ireland, and the Judges decided the point of law adversely to those who brought the action, and who suffered at the suppression of the meeting, being assaulted by the police? They decided on a point which was decided almost immediately afterwards by a Superior Court in England in a precisely different direction. Here is a conflict of opinion between English and Irish Judges. The English Judges decided, and that decision has been acted upon by the authorities ever since, both by magistrates and by the Home Secretary, in the sense that there is no right to suppress public meetings in England. You cannot do it. An example was given in a disorderly meeting of Orangemen, which the then Home Secretary avowed his inability to suppress in view of that decision of the Court. The right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland says if you are aggrieved by a suppression of a meeting, you can appeal to the Courts. Well, this is a Vote for £30,000 for the Irish Constabulary, and this body is armed with weapons of precision which they carry to these meetings, and which they use in suppression of meetings—not only batons, but sharpened bayonets and rifles of precision. The Chief Secretary for Ireland told the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) that the next time we took part in these illegal meetings and refused to disperse, we would get something harder than batons—the right hon. Gentleman does not deny that is a correct representation of what he said. [Mr. HOLMES dissented.] It is useless for the Attorney General for Ireland to shake his head; he did not make the statement, and the Chief Secretary does not deny it.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH : I did not say anything about the next time. The amount of what I said was this—that the law must be enforced at any cost.

MR. PARNELL : At half-past 1 the right hon. Gentleman gives a second edition of what he said at half-past 12, differing in every particular, differing in every word—bearing no resemblance whatever to it. Recollect, what we are

discussing, what we are trying to find out, is what is the law. The right hon. Gentleman was speaking of a meeting which was proclaimed at Cork, which was dispersed at Cork without a proclamation by a local Inspector of Police, assisted by armed constables, on which occasion many people were struck, knocked down, and kicked by the police. The right hon. Gentleman, in speaking of that incident in his campaign, said distinctly—his language is within the recollection of the Committee—he does not deny it now, although he talks of the amount of what he said—he said distinctly that, in future, we must expect something harder than batons. What does something harder than batons mean? The police carry something harder, they carry cold steel. That is what the Chief Secretary for Ireland has threatened, and the litigants, the people who feel themselves aggrieved, we are told by the right hon. Gentleman's Colleague, the Attorney General for Ireland, when they have been run through the body with a bayonet, they are at liberty to appeal to the Courts of the country. There are two Irish Law Officers present. I do not know whether it is that their salaries are so small, that they think themselves badly paid, that they have been so chary of their words, their opinions, and their advice, that we have to wait until half-past 1 before we get a few words on this legal point from the right hon. and learned Attorney General. I do not know how long we must wait for an answer to the question repeatedly asked, what is your authority for your law? Are we entitled to have this much information or not? I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, is the Committee entitled to have this information? The right hon. and learned Gentleman has excused himself on the ground of its being a technical point. We do not ask him to go into a legal argument as if he were in Court; we ask for the authority for the exercise of these grave destructive powers by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. What is the authority upon which he disperses meetings by force of arms, giving those who refuse to disperse cold steel or "something harder than batons?" What is the authority? Are we to wait for an answer? Are we to wait in vain for an answer? You have this force of

Constabulary, an essentially un-Constitutional force, to which you would not submit for a moment in this country—a force which is an evasion of the Mutiny Act, for it is a military, not a police force. You ask for money for this force; and, in view of the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, breathing threatenings of slaughter—the Chief Secretary, who has absolute control over this force, who can promote and dismiss its members as he pleases, can increase their pay, can do everything or nothing for them—we have a statement of the way in which he intends to use this force for the suppression of meetings in Ireland, and we are entitled, before the money is voted, to a plain answer—what is the law on which you rely? Where is your authority for this exercise of, as we believe, this illegal force? It is well for you to say these meetings were summoned for an unlawful purpose; that is not our opinion. Are you the only judges in the case? Do you rely on the fact that you are in possession of your superior force for the maintenance of your rule, and the power of dispersing our meetings? You found a difficulty in getting a verdict against the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and his Colleagues lately. Do you not suppose an aggrieved person in Ireland would not find an equal difficulty against you? Ah! but you have an advantage against the hon. Member for East Mayo, for you threaten murder against the people, and he has not retaliated on you in kind. You rely, then, on this superior force; you admit it, you say, because you can commit slaughter with impunity; that you will commit it, and that you will trample on the law. Is that your answer?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must be aware that he is exceeding the limits of debate in the line he is taking.

MR. PARNELL: I have asked, Sir, for a plain answer to a plain question. The right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland has taken very good care not to exceed the limits of debate. In view of the cold-blooded statement which has been made to the Committee to-night by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant; in view of the evident fact, which was self-evident from his bearing, manner, attitude, and language, that the right hon. Gentleman is not

fit to be trusted with this grave power over the lives and persons of Her Majesty's subjects in Ireland, I ask again, even at the risk of exceeding the limit of debate, I ask again for an answer to the question, What is the law upon which you rely, and where is your authority?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I have not the least intention of following the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down in his remarks, and which I believe many other Members have heard with great regret. I simply rise in consequence of his appeal, and an appeal which has been made by certain other hon. Members below the Gangway, that there should be some statement as to the law of England in this matter. I have been asked for an authoritative statement, whether the law in England is the same as it is in Ireland, and I have not a word to add to the statement made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland. [*Laughter.*] I am not disturbed by laughter. I will put my words on record, and they may be dealt with in debate. In my judgment, in my opinion, an opinion I am willing to substantiate, the law of England and Ireland, so far as I know it, was correctly stated by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland. My reason for saying I have nothing to add is not that I differ from him, or wish to avoid stating anything, but because I believe his statement is strictly correct, and applicable both to England and Ireland. It depends on no specific authority, although authorities can be found in all the books on Constitutional Law—it depends upon the Common Law. The Common Law of England is, that if persons meet together for an illegal purpose, if they combine to commit an illegal act, if the combination or meeting is in itself illegal, it is the duty of the authorities to put a stop to that illegal act, and also they are entitled to warn persons likely to engage in that act that they will be called to account for it. As has been stated, the Proclamation does not make law; the Proclamation only—if it is a proper Proclamation—has force and effect when it is directed against the commission of an illegal act. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has,

strangely enough for one of his acumen, misunderstood the statement of the Attorney General for Ireland. It is not the presence of the police that can determine whether a meeting is illegal or not. The police officer is only the visible exponent of the law. What he does is this—If the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary, or whoever is responsible for administration, deems an act illegal, he acts in support of that belief; and if he acts wrongly, his acts can be challenged in a Court of Law. It is idle to suggest—and I know the hon. Member for Cork will not misunderstand me—that the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary, or the policeman, who endeavours to stop an act he believes to be illegal, is making a law for himself. Nothing of the kind; he is simply acting in what he believes to be his duty; and if any person believes, on the other hand, that he is acting unlawfully and unjustly, the Courts will decide any question as to the legality of those acts. The hon. Member for Cork said that this view of the law had been upheld in Ireland in 1884, but that within a few days of this decision the law was decided differently in England. So far as I can understand, that is an entire mistake. There is no declaration or judicial exposition of the law with which I am acquainted which in any way laid down a different principle. The case the hon. Member for Cork alluded to is the Salvation Army case. In that case the conviction of the magistrate was simply on the ground that persons formed a procession, not because it was an illegal act itself, not because they were going to fulfil an illegal purpose—but because, being a procession, it was said it would most probably bring about a breach of the peace. But the learned Judges—Mr. Justice Field, and another whose name I do not remember at the moment—held that people had a perfect right to follow in a procession, and that a procession was not an illegal act; therefore, though they might be responsible for their conduct if it led to a breach of the peace, the action of the magistrate was not legal. As I understand the law, it is not that people meet together, not that they assemble in numbers, but that they meet together for an unlawful purpose which constitutes an unlawful meeting. I will only say, before I sit down, that I have listened to the

debate, and that I think hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have placed a strained interpretation on the language of my right hon. Friend. But be that as it may, I desire to add but one word to this debate, and that is this—that hon. Members who take part in these illegal meetings, or men in Ireland who take part in them ought to understand that the conservators of the peace have a right to disperse them, and for any consequences that follow such dispersal, great or small, they, and not the authorities, are responsible.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I intend to say but a few words, and these only in consequence of what has fallen from the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General. I do not profess to understand the law of Ireland in relation to public meetings; but I do profess to understand the law of England on the subject. For many years past I have received considerable instruction therein at the hands of various Attorneys General in this country. I think the hon. and learned Attorney General will agree with me in saying that the law as to unlawful meetings is fully laid down in the case *King v. Hunt* and others, which forms a sort of leading case. On the basis of that, and subsequent *dicta*, I take the liberty of challenging the opinion laid down by the hon. and learned Attorney General. First, before I deal with the legal part, permit me, as an English Member, to express my great regret for the words which I believe fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland under, perhaps, conditions of physical pain at the time; and which I trusted he would have thought fit to modify when they were brought to his attention. I hope I shall not be guilty of using any language that ought not to be used against one in his high position of responsibility; but if his words meant anything, they were a menace that all who engaged in similar meetings were to be prepared to meet with something more than batons; and I cannot help thinking that against meetings not yet declared illegal, meetings the object of which is not yet announced, such menaces, such threats, are in the highest degree unwise. And now I take the liberty of submitting to the Attorney General, that no Proclamation can change the character of a meeting from

legal to illegal. I remember a meeting held 17 years ago, convened for Trafalgar Square, and forbidden by the Home Secretary. The same day as that on which the Proclamation was issued I served notices on the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of Police that I intended to hold the meeting, that it would be legal, and that any attempt to disperse it would be illegal. I did hold the meeting, it was peacefully held, and no steps were taken in consequence. Suppose those who had convened the meeting had accepted, which I did not, the Proclamation forbidding it, against whom would there a remedy have been of which the Attorney General talks? Against whom could any citizen intending to take part in that meeting have taken action?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I never said that a Proclamation could make a legal meeting illegal; it is not the Proclamation—it is the purpose of the meeting.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I regret that I have not made clear to the hon. and learned Attorney General the point to which I take exception. I thought we had both agreed that a Proclamation does not vary the character of the meeting—that it was only a warning to citizens to exercise more attention with reference to the character of the meeting, a warning of possible consequences that might ensue. But I understood the Attorney General to say that if a Proclamation were unjust it could be tried in a Court of Law, and I say there is no foundation for that. There is no remedy against any public functionary who may use a Proclamation to prevent a citizen attending a meeting in which he might legally take part. It is a monstrous doctrine for any Representative of the Government charged with the duty and responsibility of using military force to threaten, with relation to a future meeting, the illegality of such meeting not being established. I will not take up the time of the Committee further; but it would be absurd to allow such a doctrine utterly misinterpreting the law to pass without challenge.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): The hon. and learned Attorney General based the legality of these Proclamations on the illegality of the object for which the meetings were held. But where is the illegality proved? If we held a

meeting that is illegal, are we not open to prosecution? If you proceed violently against the people who attend the meetings, you are responsible for all the injury that follows. But we cannot hope to make you responsible with the juries you have in Ireland. It is not possible for any subject to obtain redress against you; it would be useless for us to waste our time in the effort. I will venture to quote, as against the hon. and learned Attorney General, the opinion of a gentleman often received as an authority in debate. Professor Dicey says—

“The best proof of the narrowness of the limits in which the law gives power to the Executive to interfere with the right of meeting is to be found in the Coercion Act for Ireland, 1882, Section 10.”

The right hon. Gentleman knows what Section 10 was; it was authority given to the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim any meeting he chose. But Professor Dicey says—

“Such special enactments would make it lawful for the Lord Lieutenant to forbid a meeting he knew to be dangerous to the public peace, but the necessity for a Coercion Act shows the limited power of the Government under the law of the land.”

That is a more correct statement than that of the Attorney General. Also, with regard to the Salvation Army case, I do not think the hon. and learned Gentleman is altogether correct, for I venture to say that if the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General were in a judicial position and called upon to decide, he would not decide in a different direction, or, indeed, that any Judge would not uphold the decision of the Queen's Bench in the case. That decision altogether puts an end to the theory of the rights of the Crown to suppress public meetings. If the Crown has any fault to find, it should proceed by legal process, not in a violent and illegal manner, as they have proceeded during the last few months. Never was there a more unconstitutional doctrine than to imagine that the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant could have the slightest effect on meetings held for a lawful purpose. Meetings have been held in Ireland for the purpose of furthering the interests of the people, and on some *obiter dicta* of the Queen's Bench they have been declared illegal; but we have had no such decision on the Plan of

Campaign. If it was not an illegal document, the meetings to further it were legal meetings. We have not had a decision—the packed jury in Dublin would not convict, notwithstanding all the eloquence of the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Ireland. That packed jury would not convict, although they were chosen so as to lead any reasonable outsider to suppose the greater part were prejudiced politically against the accused. Yet these men had the courage and honesty to refuse to convict, and the Government will in future proceed to pack juries on an improved method. I must express my astonishment and regret that the hon. and learned Attorney General should have made that extraordinary statement in regard to the law, in which every Judge on the Bench would disagree with him.

Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question put,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £30,960, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Constabulary Force in Ireland.”

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 246; Noes 121: Majority 125.—(Div. List, No 39.)

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,560, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the Establishments connected therewith.”

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.”—(*Mr. Labouchere*.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I must appeal to the Committee to consider the position in which we are placed. We have a certain number of Votes to get through, and that must be got through by Monday night at the latest. We may report Progress now, but only on the distinct understanding that the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates must be disposed of on Monday night. I venture to appeal to the Committee to take such Votes as will not detain us now, so that

time will be left free for Monday's discussion. I am only saying what is necessary for the exigencies of the Public Service, when I say the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates must be disposed of by Monday night.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I think the discussion of the Science and Art Vote need not occupy much time; and I think, perhaps, it would be as well if the right hon. Gentleman adhered to the arrangement for taking Votes in order, inasmuch as if these Votes can be passed without discussion they will as readily be disposed of on Monday as now, and there would be an advantage to Members who have left the House and who are interested in the question to be raised.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The Diplomatic Votes must take a long discussion. It might be convenient, perhaps, to take those Votes to which here are no objections.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Perhaps the hon. Member for Shoreditch will proceed with his observations now?

MR. JAMES STUART: No, Sir; What may have to be said on the Science and Art Vote, which is a very important matter, and one on which many Members have waited their opportunity for a long time, had better be said at an earlier period of the Sitting. My contention is not at all of an obstructive tendency, and the Government must see we are not unreasonable, seeing that we have now no opportunity for raising discussion upon matters of special interest, except upon Votes in Supply. It is desirable that the points we desire to raise should be under the consideration of the Government before the Education Estimates come on.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Upon Class V. there are, I know, a certain number of Members who desire to speak. I should suggest that the matters here should be postponed with the other Business.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): With reference to what has been said about proceeding with other Votes, I am firmly opposed to taking the Votes out of their order. It is unfair to Members who are absent.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I undertook to agree just now to reporting Progress, on the distinct understanding that the whole of the Supplementary Civil Ser-

vice Estimates must be voted in Committee on Monday.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): We give no undertaking.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I do not understand on what ground the right hon. Gentleman appeals to the Committee. We are not at the end of the Session.

SIR RICHARD PAGET: I rise to Order. What, Sir, is the Question before the Committee?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The attempt of the right hon. Gentleman to put pressure on the Committee is altogether unwarranted. We are merely at the beginning of a long Session of Parliament, and it is not the fault of anyone on this side of the House that we are driven into these corners—that we have only another day to discuss these Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman has the arrangement of Business, and it is for the pleasure of the Government, not for the convenience of the House, that a particular arrangement has been followed. It is an unprecedented step that the right hon. Gentleman desires us to take, in proceeding with the Estimates after we have spent the whole afternoon and night in the discussion. On the particular Vote standing next, I venture to say the views of my hon. Friend must carry weight. The Science and Art Vote is of interest to the whole of the United Kingdom; and how is it possible, with justice to those who feel that interest, to make speeches when they cannot be reported, and practically to give a silent vote with no discussion. I am not prepared to pass the Vote in silence. It would be infinitely better to rely on a whole night's discussion on Monday, rather than go on now. We might take Votes to-morrow, or even on Saturday, if necessary; but it is most unreasonable to ask hon. Members to enter on this question at this hour in the morning.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) has explained to the Committee that the Government are in a difficulty as to the progress of Supply, and that it is necessary for the service of the country that the rest of the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates should be voted by Monday night. Well, that is not the fault of the Committee; probably, if he had adopted the ordinary course always adopted by Governments, of taking these

Supplementary Estimates at an early period of the Session, so as to insure that they shall be carried through within the time required by law, the difficulty would not have arisen. The time, consequently, is very short; but he cannot accuse the Committee of having wasted time, or delayed Business. Seldom, in late years, have the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates been voted in a fewer number of Sittings. This is the second Sitting on which the Estimates have been taken, and usually, in previous Sessions, they have occupied five or six Sittings. The right hon. Gentleman has freely enough explained that he is pressed for time, and he is asking the Committee to come to an agreement that the Estimates shall be passed by Monday. Will he, on his side, give the Committee those facilities which it is in his power to give for the discussion of these Estimates, by putting down Supply for to-morrow night? If the right hon. Gentleman declines to do that, then I do not think he has established his claim, when he has Friday, usually a Supply night, at his disposal. I do not think he has established his claim to ask us to go on at half-past 2 with Votes in Supply. I put this to the right hon. Gentleman, as a reasonable man, whether he comes before the Committee on an equal footing, in asking them to continue a discussion at half-past 2 after 10½ hours' work, when he refuses to give the Committee facilities for discussion which it is in his power to give? Surely, if it is of such importance to get these Estimates by the close of Monday's Sitting, the right hon. Gentleman would be justified in allocating to-morrow to Supply. He might fear that he might not make Progress to-morrow. He might suppose that Supply would be blocked by Motions on going into Committee. Well, all I can say is, speaking for myself and my Colleagues, we will undertake not to put down Notices of Motion against his going into Supply to-morrow. This is a fair proposal. Let me put it in another way. The right hon. Gentleman asks for an understanding from the Committee that this class of Supply shall close on Monday. Well, suppose we give him this undertaking, on condition that he gives to-morrow night for Supply. He would be equally guarded in that way against having to-morrow devoted to

other purposes than Supply, such as Motions. I have suggested to him the possibility of obtaining two guarantees. I give him, on behalf of our Party, an assurance that we will not bring forward Motions to-morrow if he sets down Supply. We will agree for ourselves—and, no doubt, other sections of the House will agree—if these facilities are given, under the circumstances, and in view of the fact that it is not the fault of the Committee. He might fairly give to-morrow for Supply, and if Supply finishes, then he can go on with other Business on Monday.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I do, Sir, wish to be understood as a reasonable man; but it would be utterly unreasonable to adopt the proposal of the hon. Gentleman. In our judgment, it is necessary to proceed with the Business we have set down for to-morrow; it is most urgent. The hon. Member is also aware that though he might, for himself and his Friends, undertake that no Motions should be moved to Supply to-morrow, if that is taken instead of the Rules of Procedure, he must be aware that such an arrangement would not be binding upon other hon. Gentlemen. The discussion of these Supplementary Civil Service Estimates has been much longer than usual. I have had experience and knowledge of facts and figures to sustain my assertion. I might urge another point to shorten present discussion—that is, that for every subject proposed to be raised, an equal opportunity would be afforded by the Votes in ordinary Supply. I must press to have the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates completed by Monday, and I trust the Committee will undertake to do this. I assent now to reporting Progress.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): What the right hon. Gentleman has said is perfectly true; my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) can answer only for his immediate followers—not for other Members of the Opposition. It is impossible to prevent any Member from putting down an Amendment to the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair; and does that not show the absolute futility of a proposal that we should enter into an undertaking for Monday? These understandings are absolutely futile, and cannot bind men not now present. If the right hon. Gentleman desires to earn

the character of a reasonable man, he should give the Committee the reasons why it is necessary these Votes should be passed on Monday night. I am under the impression that several nights later would admit of ample time for the Appropriation Bill to go through all its stages in both Houses.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Besides the Civil Service Estimates, there are the Army and Navy Estimates and the Army and Navy Supplementary Estimates to pass before the close of the financial year.

MR. PARNELL: I may point out the position in which we are, and the concession the right hon. Gentleman is refusing. He has taken advantage of the shortness of time left to deprive us of what we ask for—a discussion on Friday. He says it is necessary to take the Rules of Procedure to-morrow. I do not see why that necessity exists, or how the right hon. Gentleman makes out his contention. Under the Resolution of the House by which these Rules are set down from day to day, it is possible for the right hon. Gentleman to set them down or not, as he pleases. It seems to me he is rather anxious to proceed with two things at the same time, making equal progress with both; but he had better beware of the fate of that man who tried to do too many things at the same time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

—o—

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSAION).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon certain charges, brought under the notice of this House by Mr. Howell, Member for the North-East Division of Bethnal Green, and Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for the Borough of Northampton, alleging improper use and malversation of public funds of the Corporation of London, by or with the consent of members and officials of such Corporation.”—(Mr. Howell.)

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I do not rise to oppose this Motion; on the contrary, I welcome it; but I

Mr. Parnell

do wish to put distinctly before the House the circumstances of the case. In the first place, the Corporation have courted this inquiry; while the Municipal Reform League, as represented by the hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine), have shrunk from it. I wish, further, to impress upon the House what are the personal accusations charged against myself. The hon. Member (Mr. Bradlaugh) pledges himself to prove that the Lord Mayor in 1884, who happened to be myself, personally spent money for certain corrupt purposes. That is—I do not say what the hon. Member for Bethnal Green said—but that is what the hon. Member for Northampton, who is joined with him in this Motion, stated. That is the charge brought before the House; and I think, when the Committee is struck, as the charge involves the honour of a Member of this House, that the Committee should investigate this charge before they go into the question of the acts of Mr. Johnson, or Mr. Peters, or anyone else. That is the charge made by the hon. Members; and if they fail to prove that charge, I may leave the House to judge how much attention should be paid to the remainder.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to point out that I have nothing whatever to do with the charges made by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). My statement was perfectly clear and distinct. I undertook to bring the matter before the House, and the Motion I propose is with reference to the statement I made. I made no personal charge against the hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Robert Fowler). I distinctly disavowed that. I wish distinctly to point out that the charge brought by me I mean to substantiate absolutely; but I object altogether to the Committee placing me in the position of having to substantiate charges made by the hon. Member for Northampton. That is a matter for the hon. Member for Northampton to undertake and justify when I have justified the statement I brought before the House. I deny the right of the hon. Gentleman the Member for London to dictate to the Committee the form in which the Committee should carry out its proceedings. Under ordinary circumstances, the Committee would take the charges brought by myself with regard to the expenditure of public money;

it is not a charge brought by me against the hon. Gentleman or any hon. Member of this House. I was clear, definite, and distinct in this respect. I told the hon. Gentleman personally, before I brought the matter before the House, the precise line I should take. I took that line, and I do not waver from it one iota. I think, under ordinary circumstances, that the course adopted should be quite contrary to that indicated by the hon. Gentleman. The first things to be substantiated are the charges made by me. Then, after I have fastened these charges on the Corporation officials, will be the time for the hon. Member for Northampton to prefer and justify the charges he has made.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I prefer to adhere to my own charge made the day before yesterday, and not to accept the charge in the form the hon. Gentleman (Sir Robert Fowler) has chosen to substitute. My charge was a specific one. I undertook to prove that large sums of money—of public money—have been issued under circumstances which compelled on the part of the hon. Gentleman knowledge of its being improperly used to influence this House. I did not make the charge the hon. Gentleman has put into my mouth to-night; the one I have made I will prove up to the hilt.

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they do take evidence on oath.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.—(Mr. Howell.)

INTESTATES ESTATES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ambrose, Bill to amend the Law relating to the distribution of the Estates of Intestates, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Neville, Mr. Joseph Howard, Mr. Addison, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 187.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 4th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Third Reading*—Law of Evidence Amendment (23); Solicitors (Ireland) * (31), and *passed*.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

THE PAYMASTER GENERAL (Earl BEAUCHAMP) said, the previous night the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Peterborough) appeared to refer to him as a supporter of the Church Patronage Bill. He (Earl Beauchamp) desired to disclaim ever having expressed himself as opposed to the principle that the next presentation to livings ought never to be sold. In the proceedings before the Select Committee of 1874 he had voted in favour of a Resolution laying down the principle that Church patronage partook of the nature of a trust, and to that principle he still adhered; but at the same time he wished it to be understood that he was not in favour of a universal prohibition of the sale of next presentations. Under these circumstances he could hardly be supposed to be in favour of this Bill.

MALTA.

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

EARL DE LA WARR said, that the Notice which he had given to call attention to the affairs of Malta seemed, perhaps, to embrace a wider range than it might be convenient to bring before their Lordships at the same moment. He hoped, however, that what he now wished to say might be kept within a small compass. For some time past the state of Malta had been far from satisfactory. There had been a friction in the management of public affairs which had produced an amount of uneasiness which might, perhaps, be more correctly described as discontent among a people naturally loyal and well-disposed, and which was now assuming a serious aspect. We were not living in a time when things were standing still. Education was progressing with rapid strides; mutual communication between almost all countries of the world was fast spreading; competition in trade and commerce was increasing, and in some places amounted to almost a struggle for existence; steam navigation and electric telegraphs had greatly changed the course of commerce; but notwithstanding all this the Maltese policy had remained substantially unaltered. Why had not Malta kept pace with what was going on outside? How was it that Malta, since its connection with England, had

been left, as it were, behind, while other Dependencies and Colonies of this country had so much advanced in a commercial and political point of view? It was not because the Maltese people were indifferent to it, or were wanting in talent, or energy, or industry. Their previous history proved the contrary. The real cause, he believed, was—and he said it with great regret—that British subjects in Malta had been debarred from the advantages, the privileges, and the rights of British subjects elsewhere. The consequence had been that trade and commerce and agriculture had not been developed. Opportunities had been little afforded for the advancement of young men in various professions, especially as regarded the Civil Service examinations, which were available to British subjects in other places; and not the least of the causes which operated against increasing prosperity in Malta was that to which he now wished specially to allude—he meant the form of Government, which virtually excluded and crushed all political life. It might not, perhaps, be remembered by some of their Lordships that Malta was a Dependency of this country for 49 years without having any control at all of its own internal affairs, whether as regarded its taxation or any other matter which concerned its welfare—that until the year 1849 it was under a military Government without any elective Members of Council chosen by the people, and was hardly looked upon in any other light than as a fortress to uphold the power and influence of this country. But after this a slight concession was made of a Council of Government, consisting of 18 Members, of whom eight were to be elected upon a franchise and 10 to be official Members, the Governor being one, with a casting vote. The boon, as might readily be seen, was a small one. The elected Members could always be outvoted by the official Members, of which there were several cases on record. The grant of this Constitution, if so it could be called, was made in the time of Mr. More O’Ferrall, the first, and, he believed, the only Civil Governor, and during his term of Office it was understood that the official Members might vote according to their convictions. Afterwards, however, under his successors, the official Members were bound to vote with the Government on all

occasions. At length, however, a more favourable interpretation was given by Lord Cardwell (then Mr. Cardwell), when Colonial Secretary, in 1864, in answer to a numerous signed Petition from Malta. Lord Cardwell said—

“That great consideration should be shown to the opinions of the elected Members of Council in matters of local and domestic interest, and that, above all, no Vote of money should be pressed against the majority of the elected Members except under very special circumstances in which the public interests or credit were seriously at stake, and never without an immediate Report to the Secretary of State.”

This was really the first instance of the acknowledgment of the right of the vote of the majority of the elected Members to have any weight in questions of money or other local matters since Malta became a Dependency of this country. But, unhappily, this view of Lord Cardwell's, adopted, he believed, by the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Kimberley), who was Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1873, was not taken up by Lord Carnarvon, and that policy was virtually withdrawn. His noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Derby) who was Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1884, returned in some measure to the opinion of Lord Cardwell, and said—

“The concession so made has not been withdrawn, but supplemented by my despatch of the 8th of March last (1883), which directs that the local Government shall not overrule the unanimous wish of the elected Members without the express authority of the Secretary of State.”

Now, there was on the face of this a very great grievance as affecting the Government of Malta—that a discretionary power should be vested in the Colonial Secretary of reversing the policy of his Predecessor on such a vital point as this—namely, whether the elected Members of the Council were or were not to have the right of passing any Money Vote or any question involving matters of local and domestic interest, even though unanimous, unless it was in accordance with the views of the official Members of the Council, who could at all times command a majority. It was really difficult to describe what this kind of Government was, unless that it was a mockery of a Constitution. Could their Lordships be surprised that there was uneasiness and discontent at Malta? They saw other Dependencies of this

country enjoying rights as British subjects which were withheld from them. He held in his hand a copy of a paper bearing the signature of Lord Hampden, recently addressed by him, as Lord Lieutenant, to the county of Sussex, a few words of which, with their Lordships' permission, he would read. Lord Hampden said—

“During the Queen's long and eventful reign there are no events more striking than the growth both of our Colonial and Indian Empires. The English race has in these 50 years taken root in the various parts of the Queen's Dominions, and nations now numbering many millions have grown to large proportions in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope, and elsewhere, speaking our own language, adopting our own laws, having their own Parliaments, formed on British models, all these—with ourselves—fellow subjects under one common Sovereign.”

Their Lordships doubtless welcomed the fulfilment of this happy event. But it might well be asked, why had Malta been excluded from this cause of rejoicing? Why should Representative Governments be granted to the West Indies, to Mauritius, to Newfoundland, and many other Colonies, and even to Cyprus, which in this respect enjoyed more British rights than Malta? Let him, then, put plainly before their Lordships what it was the Maltese people desired. They asked, as British subjects, to be fairly represented in the Council of Government, and that they might exercise a reasonable control over all matters of local and domestic interest. He confessed that he was at a loss to see in what way Imperial interests would be endangered by such a concession. Questions in any way affecting the fortress would naturally be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Legislative Council, and be left entirely in the hands of the Governor and Executive Council. There were matters of detail into which it would not be desirable then to enter until the Papers for which he was about to move were laid upon the Table of the House. He would only add that the sympathy of their Lordships on this question was anxiously looked for by the Maltese people. They had much patriotism, and they loved their country. They had shed their blood for it, and had freely expended their wealth and treasure in its cause. They had given to this country one of its most valuable fortresses, and they asked only that

rights which in times past they had enjoyed might be confirmed to them as British subjects.

Address for Papers on the Affairs of Malta, especially those relating to the Government of Malta.—(*The Earl De La Warr.*)

LORD BRABOURNE said, he did not propose then to enter into a discussion about the Constitution of Malta, either as it had been or was now. The noble Earl (Earl De La Warr) had moved for Papers; and if, when those Papers were presented to the House, there was anything in them to render a debate desirable that would be the proper time for a discussion to take place. He believed that no one would think it unnecessary that the affairs of Malta should be discussed in that House because it was a small Island with a small population. The manner in which Malta became a Dependency of the British Crown and the engagements which were entered into at the time constituted a reason why the affairs of the Island should engage the attention of their Lordships, and why any complaints which the Maltese had to make should receive respectful consideration. No doubt there had been some unpleasantness in Malta during recent years with respect to its government; but he was bound to say that, so far as his information went, he did not think there was any disloyalty on the part of the population, or any agitation which could be said to be disloyal in any degree. The Maltese were loyal to the British Crown; and he believed that if they were treated fairly they would become even more firmly attached to England than they now were. There were two principles which must underlie any action of the Colonial Office with regard to Malta. Nothing must be done which would impair the position of Malta as a great naval and military station of England, or at all interfere with the direct Imperial control of the garrison and fortress. Subject to that, and consistently with the interests of the country, he would say that it was most desirable that the national susceptibilities of the Maltese people should be tenderly respected, their legitimate aspirations favourably considered, and the development of Representative Institutions promoted and encouraged. Up to the present time the reformers in Malta, even the

most violent of them, had been very moderate in their demands—namely, for the gradual development of Representative Institutions, without clashing with the Imperial Government of the Island; there had, indeed, been an election at which the people had shown their displeasure at the inattention shown to their complaints of the constitution of the Council by electing two candidates, one of whom was called “ridiculous” and the other “infamous” by the reformers themselves, and this proceeding could not be defended. It was, however, only an episode which might well be forgotten, and which was unlikely to recur. Of course, in this country such things as ridiculous and infamous countries were unknown, and this was an unfortunate method of enforcing Constitutional views. In the future he hoped that the Government might be able to see their way to concede the wishes of the people of Malta without in any manner compromising the character or strength of the Island as a great fortress.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (*The Earl of Onslow*) said, no one regretted more than he did the unsatisfactory condition of matters recently in regard to the legislative affairs of Malta. They were not without experience in this country of certain Members being sent to Parliament who did not contribute to the rapid and efficient discharge of Public Business. He was sure, therefore, that their Lordships would sympathize with the difficulties in which the Governor of Malta and the Secretary of State for the Colonies found themselves placed with respect to the Legislative Government of that Dependency. He agreed with the noble Lord (Lord Brabourne) that inasmuch as the Island of Malta was not acquired by this country in the course of conquest, but the Maltese people having of their own free will asked to be placed under the protection of the British Crown, there was a reason why we should feel all the more bound to consider their reasonable and legitimate aspirations. But he differed from the noble Earl (Earl De La Warr), who brought the subject forward, when he said that nothing had been done towards conciliating the desires of the Maltese people. As long ago as 1864 Mr. Cardwell expressed his wish that great consideration should be shown to the elected

Members of the Maltese Council, and the policy which Mr. Cardwell inaugurated had been the consistent and undeviating policy of successive British Governments, and was also the policy of the present Government. The Governor had himself communicated with Her Majesty's Government, and in one of the Papers which would be laid on the Table in response to the request of the noble Lord it would be seen that the Governor said that he was desirous of allowing to the Maltese as much control over their own local affairs as was consistent with efficient administration. There was reason to believe that the Nationalist Party in Malta were thoroughly satisfied with the present Governor, and the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor had been credited with having done more to advance the interests of Malta within the last three years than had been done in the preceding generation. He was justified in saying that the policy of Her Majesty's Government had always been to meet the views of the Nationalist Party, and the present Government was not less desirous of doing so than any of its Predecessors. It must be borne in mind that there were two conditions essential to the enjoyment of Representative Institutions. The first was that the country desiring them should be willing to accept them, and should be capable of discharging the great responsibilities they involved. He would not say anything as to whether the Maltese were capable of undertaking these responsibilities, nor whether those on whose behalf the noble Earl pleaded represented any general feeling in the Island. The second point in this case was that Malta was one of a chain of fortresses between this country and the Suez Canal; and it would be admitted that a Dependency which enjoyed the advantages of connection with the British Crown should, to some extent, subordinate its individual interests to the interests of the Empire at large. Therefore, Her Majesty's Government were not asking too much of the Maltese when they asked them to remember that their fortress was absolutely indispensable to the British Empire, and that nothing could be allowed to occur in that Island which would for one moment withdraw from the Representatives of the Imperial Government the ultimate control of every matter which affected Imperial

interests. Several schemes had been proposed for the re-arrangement of the Constitution of Malta. All these were under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; but no one of them had received more favourable consideration than another. An incorrect and misleading telegram had been sent from this country to Malta. It was not correct that the Secretary of State had approved of any Constitution laid before him. All that Her Majesty's Government had ever done was to say that they would be glad to see a large representation of Maltese upon the Council, and also that they should have a larger share in local administration. The Secretary of State had made no statement in respect to any particular scheme of Constitution, and had only said that he desired to give as much representation to the Native Maltese in the Council of the Government as it was possible to give them consistently with the safety of the fortress. The Governor had been requested by telegraph to come over at once to advise the Secretary of State, and had started in company with a Native Maltese gentleman, Dr. Carbone, and would arrive in England on Monday next. Until Her Majesty's Government had had an opportunity of discussing the matter fully with the Governor it was impossible for them to decide upon any alteration in the Constitution. In conclusion, he thanked their Lordships for the patience with which they had listened to him on this, the first time that he had addressed them in an official capacity; and he trusted their Lordships would be satisfied with the assurances he had given.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

IRELAND—THE JURY LAWS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD FITZGERALD, in rising to call attention to the Jury Laws of Ireland, and their administration; and to ask, Whether Her Majesty's Government intend to propose any alterations in those laws with a view the better to secure the due and impartial administration of justice? said, that the subject was not a very inviting one; but he felt it desirable to introduce it to the notice of their Lordships, as at the present moment it was of great importance. His motive for putting the Notice on the Paper was not solely because of the great importance

of the question, but also, as it was manifest from occurrences in "another place," that great misapprehension and misunderstanding existed. The misunderstanding which existed had not been cleared away by the hesitating manner in which answers had been given to Questions in the House of Commons. He had also recollected that it was one of their Lordships' proudest prerogatives to superintend the administration of law and justice in Her Majesty's Dominions, and to see, in fact, that right was done in every part of the United Kingdom. The advantage of introducing the subject in their Lordships' House was that it would be calmly and dispassionately discussed. Two Judges had recently given descriptions of the counties of Limerick and Clare which were not encouraging as to the restoration of peace and order. *The Times* yesterday reported a typical case as follows :—

"At the Clare Assizes, on a charge of assault, before a Petty Jury, a verdict of 'Not Guilty' was returned, although the evidence clearly pointed to the guilt of the accused, and there was virtually no defence. Mr. Justice O'Brien, addressing Mr. Morphy, Crown Solicitor, asked him to consider what course he would adopt in reference to any other criminal cases remaining for trial at the Assizes. At the sitting of the Court next morning, Mr. Morphy said that he had determined on not proceeding with the trial of John Dwyer charged with shooting at a police constable. The case was accordingly postponed to next Assizes, the accused being allowed out on bail."

The Jury Law was very ancient, so ancient, indeed, that it was difficult to ascertain its foundation. But it might be truly said that the Jury Laws of Ireland stood on the same Constitutional foundations, and were nearly identical with those of England. Formerly, in Ireland, as in this country, there were considerable abuses which were partially remedied in 1833 by an Act passed by Lord Grey's Government. The constitution of a jury panel then rested altogether in the hands of the Sheriff; but in 1871 an Act was passed making an automatic and alphabetical selection of persons qualified to serve. He mentioned the name of the author of that Act, Lord O'Hagan, with respect and affection, and no one could doubt that he proposed the measure in a spirit of patriotism and for the public good. The lines of that Act were Constitutional. The Act was intended to remedy the evils

which then existed. It took the matter on to entirely new ground. The panel was taken entirely outside the reach of public officers, and he said that because he saw it stated recently that mistakes had been made in the jury panel either by the Public Prosecutor or the Crown Solicitor, who had no more to do with it than any one of their Lordships. Their Lordships might have read of the Sligo trials, where the panel was quashed. He had looked into that case, and there were technical mistakes, and the eminent Judge who presided quashed the panel; but he had the authority of that eminent Judge for stating that there was no ground for imputing wilful misconduct to the public officers. Lord O'Hagan did not himself perceive any danger when he induced Parliament to take what it could not be doubted was a leap in the dark. He went so low as to flood the jurors' book with names of men wholly unfit for the duties of jurymen, four-fifths of these being people largely disqualified—some ignorant, some illiterate, some subject to intimidation; and so in time there came on the jury panel persons wholly unsuited to perform their duties. That was a matter which had not been entirely remedied; and from that leap in the dark they had only partially recovered. The danger to the administration of justice became so apparent that in 1873, six or seven months after the Act came into operation, a Committee of the House of Commons—of which the Marquess of Hartington was Chairman—was appointed to report on the working of the Irish jury system, and to suggest the requisite amendments to the law. In 1874, upon the assembling of a new Parliament, the Commission was reconstituted, with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chairman. The Commissioners made their Report, but their suggestions were not all given effect to. The effect of them was that a Statute was passed to increase the qualification to nearly double what it was, both in reference to common and special juries. But the result even now was not altogether satisfactory. In 1881, a Select Committee of their Lordships' House, of which the Marquess of Lansdowne was Chairman, found that the legislation of the preceding 10 years had not gone on sound principles, the great body of names on the jurors' books consisted of farmers, and—

"That the system, in summoning jurors, of invariable adherence to the dictionary order of the names in the jurors' books, has not worked well, and requires alteration."

It further reported that—

"The evidence leaves no room for doubt that in many cases the fears of the jurors have been operated upon, sometimes by direct intimidation, sometimes by the apprehension of consequences morally or materially injurious to themselves. Members of the jury panel are, we learn, not infrequently subjected to pressure in anticipation of a coming trial. It is obvious that in districts where the whole agricultural community is penetrated by a widespread organization which habitually enforces its rules by the maltreatment or persecution of those who disregard them, it must be difficult or impossible for jurors, themselves members of that community, to withstand the influences to which they are exposed."

The adoption of the suggestion as to increase of qualification is

"Not unattended with difficulty. It is probable, although upon this point we have not obtained conclusive testimony, that in many districts an increase of the qualification from £40 to £50 or £60 would diminish the number of jurors to an extent which would render the burden of service too onerous on those who would be left."

The evidence taken left no room for doubt that, under the system adopted, in many instances jurymen were operated upon, sometimes by direct intimidation, and sometimes by the apprehension of consequences morally or materially injurious to themselves, and that it was often impossible for them to withstand the influences to which they were exposed. With regard to the question of an increase of the qualification of jurors, on that point he (Lord Fitzgerald) entertained considerable doubt; but the matter was one deserving of serious consideration by their Lordships whether further amendment was not necessary. A point which caused great excitement at the present moment in connection with the administration of the law was what was called jury-packing. All Englishmen loved fair play, and so did he. He had looked into the matter to see whether the complaint that had been made was justified. By jury-packing was popularly meant the exclusion of Roman Catholics who were returned on the panel from taking part in trials. If it was true that practice existed he should certainly consider it a disgrace to the law. If Roman Catholics were excluded because they were Roman Catholics—if any sections of the community were ex-

cluded because of their religious opinions, he should think it was a great injustice, and would sooner see the whole system swept away than have such an injustice continued. But Roman Catholics were excluded from the jury-box, not because they were Roman Catholics, but because they happened to belong to a class whose sympathies were with the accused, and who might be subject to intimidation, and for other good reasons. In reference to the framing of the jury panel and the setting aside of jurors, the law in England and in Ireland was substantially the same. By the 9th of *Geo. IV.*, the claim of the Public Prosecutor to challenge peremptorily was negatived; but this Proviso was added—that

"It is not to affect the power of any Court to order any juror to stand aside until the panel shall be gone through at the prayer of them that prosecute for the King."

In 1798, at the trial of Arthur O'Connor at Maidstone for high treason, the number of challenges allowed by law to the prisoner—namely, 35—having been made, and 25 for the Crown, the trial proceeded. There was a vigorous argument by Mr. Scott, counsel for the prisoner, and a solemn protest; but the three Judges who presided over the trial allowed as unquestionable the right of the Crown. At the trial in Ireland of Roger O'Connor in 1817 for the robbery of the mail, the prisoner challenged peremptorily to the extent permitted by the law—namely, 35, and there were 25 stands-by on the part of the Crown. In 1820 there was a trial for high treason in this country—that of Thistlewood. In that case there were 25 challenges for the prisoner and 26 for the Crown. But if there was any room for doubt it was closed by the case of "*Mansel v. Regina.*" Lord Campbell, in his judgment, affirmed that of the Court of Queen's Bench—"That the Crown is entitled as of right to set aside any juror when called." He (Lord Fitzgerald) was desirous of calling attention to some excellently prepared regulations issued July 5, 1839, by the then Attorney General (the Right Hon. Maziere Brady) to all Crown Solicitors in Ireland to regulate their conduct in exercising the right to direct jurors to "stand by." After stating the instructions of his immediate Predecessors, Mr. Brady added—

"The main points of those instructions appear to me to be—first, that no person should

be set aside by the Crown on account of his religious or political opinions; and, secondly, that the Crown Solicitor should be able in every case in which the privilege is exercised to state the grounds on which he thought proper so to exercise it. In the propriety of these directions I entirely concur. The first appears to me to be founded on the most obvious principle of policy and justice; and the second is consistent with all the rules which govern the responsibility of public officers."

After an exhaustive enumeration of the legal grounds of challenge, he added—

"I wish it to be understood that the setting aside of jurors by the Crown is not to be confined to cases in which an actual legal cause of challenge could ultimately be established, and I will mention some instance in which it appears to me that the privilege may be so exercised with justice and propriety."

He instanced, *inter alia*—

"In cases, too, arising out of or connected with trade combinations or other confederacies of a like character it will be obviously improper to leave on the jury any person who may be known to be himself engaged in the same or a similar association, or to have given countenance or encouragement to it."

This valuable Code of Instructions, worthy to be classed as a State Paper, thus concluded—

"You must be well aware that in prosecutions the discovery of truth and the attainment of justice are the paramount considerations to be attended to. To these ends nothing can more powerfully conduce than the impartial return and selection of jurors, and I have no doubt that in exercising the privileges of the Crown on this subject you will regard only the public duty confided to your charge, remembering at the same time how important it is that the performance of that duty should be divested of all appearance of prejudice or partiality, and, above all, endeavouring to secure that public confidence in the administration of justice which is the best guarantee of the peace and good order of society."

Succeeding Law Officers adopted those instructions. He (Lord Fitzgerald) himself did so, with some practical additions as to unlawful combinations; and he had no doubt his noble and learned Friend (Lord Ashbourne) did the like when he filled the Office of Attorney General some 10 years since. It had been contended that jury-packing existed because of the exclusion of Roman Catholics; but these jurors might be set aside for other reasons than because they were Roman Catholics. Some trials which excited a good deal of attention took place at Sligo, and it was alleged that there was jury-packing there. He had not the facts before him; but, a few weeks before the Woodford trial took place, a

series of articles began to appear in *United Ireland*. In one of those articles it was stated that—

"We look to the Irish jurors this winter to teach this cowardly, cut-throat Government of ours a lesson never to be forgotten. The jurors can do it, and we dare swear they will. Our Irish jurors are the one barrier that stands between us and absolute and undiluted despotism. What a paradise of tyrants the island would be if it were not for juries!"

A mass meeting was also held on the Sunday before the trial, and the speeches delivered at it were characterized by more than usual violence. On December 4 *United Ireland* published an article concluding thus—

"We earnestly exhort every man among them to be at his post. To every man among them we venture to repeat the solemn enjoinder of his oath—'He shall well and truly try and a true deliverance make, so help him God in his own sore need.'"

This was a direct appeal to the jurors to find a verdict not according to the evidence or the law. Their Lordships must not shut their eyes to the fact that in Ireland at present intimidation was going on, and, along with the intimidation, punishment after the trial took place. They could not forget the case of the Dublin juror who was nearly assassinated in the streets; nor the cases of two Cork merchants—gentlemen of respectability—whom it was attempted to ruin, because they concurred in verdicts which were just and true. When a man got into the jury-box, he was bound, regardless of intimidation and of all other influences which might be brought to bear upon him, to do his duty fearlessly and honestly. If he did not do that he did not do what he had sworn to do, and he was unfit to discharge the duty of a jurymen; and such a man the Crown was bound to direct to stand aside. He (Lord Fitzgerald) had felt himself compelled to undertake the duty of bringing this matter before their Lordships, and he was obliged to the House for having allowed him to state his views with regard to it at such length, because he thought that—having had an experience of 22 years in the administration of the Criminal Law in Ireland—he was somewhat qualified to state what was the law upon the question. If in the course of his experience any instance of the Public Prosecutor ordering a jurymen to stand aside on the ground of his religion had

come to his knowledge, he would have made a protest against it, and it would have been attended to. In his opinion the Criminal Law in Ireland was well and mercifully administered. He had brought this question under the notice of their Lordships with the view, not of disturbing the present jury system in Ireland, but of preventing misunderstanding and error. He begged to conclude by asking whether Her Majesty's Government intended to propose any alterations in those laws with a view the better to secure the due and impartial administration of justice?

LORD BRAMWELL said, that before the Question of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Fitzgerald) was answered he wished to make a few observations with regard to the subject to which it referred. The statements of the noble and learned Lord with regard to the Criminal Law of Ireland required no confirmation. The noble and learned Lord, however, had referred to the Criminal Law of England; and as he himself had been concerned in the administration of that law for a long period, he desired to say that the noble and learned Lord had accurately stated the law in this country with regard to the right of the Crown to direct jurors to stand by. Upon this point he should like to refer to the case of "*The Queen v. Mansel*." In that case the prisoner was indicted for murder, and the jurors on the jury panel had been selected from two localities—namely, from the town of Maidstone, and from Rochester and Chatham. It was known at the time that there existed at Rochester and Chatham a club with which a large number of the inhabitants were connected, the members of which had expressed a strong objection to capital punishment, and who had stated that if they were placed in the jury-box in a case in which the offence charged was a capital one they would not find the accused guilty of murder as long as capital punishment was enforced. That being the condition of things, the Counsel for the Crown in the case in question had felt it to be their duty to keep the Rochester and Chatham men out of the jury-box, while the Counsel for the prisoner was naturally anxious to get them into it. Accordingly, the prisoner's Counsel peremptorily challenged 35 Maidstone jurymen, and the Counsel for the Crown

had all Rochester and Chatham jurymen directed to stand by. The result was that there were fewer than 12 men to go into the jury-box. The power of the Crown to direct any other Rochester or Chatham man to stand aside was then gone, because the Crown could not exercise its right to direct jurors to stand aside in such a manner that the trial could not take place. In this state of things a Rochester man was called. The Counsel for the Crown called upon him to stand by, and objection was taken on the part of the prisoner that they had no power to order him to stand by. Just at that moment a jury which had previously retired to consider their verdict returned into Court, and from among them a sufficient number of Maidstone men were obtained to make up the jury in the murder case, notwithstanding the objection of the Counsel for the prisoner that the Rochester man ought to have been allowed to go into the box. The accused having been found guilty, the matter was made the subject of a Writ of Error, and both the Court of Queen's Bench and the Exchequer Chamber held that the Counsel for the Crown were within their right. The reason of the Counsel for the Crown acting as they did was not before these Courts; but no one doubted or complained that if the Crown had the right, its Counsel had only done their duty in keeping out of the jury-box those whom they had reason to believe would give a wrong verdict for wrong reasons. If that was a case of jury-packing it was one of packing into the jury-box men who would do their duty. The 12 men who were ultimately got into the jury-box were men against whom no objection could be taken, for if any could have been, it would have been done by a challenge by the prisoner for cause.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND (Lord ASHBOURNE) said, no one was better entitled to speak on the subject of the Irish Jury Law than the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Fitzgerald), who had spoken with a full knowledge of—and from a long and honourable connection with—the administration of the law in Ireland with all the strength of knowledge, and with all the earnestness of conviction. It was difficult to overrate the important bearing which this question of trial

by jury had upon the preservation of law and order in Ireland. The noble and learned Lord had stated with unanswerable truth that the jury system in Ireland was in all its great essentials the same as that of England and of Scotland. That was a statement which would face the light of day with unmistakable clearness, and which could not be challenged by anyone having any real acquaintance with the subject. The actual working out and details of the jury system in Ireland was founded on Lord O'Hagan's Act. He agreed with his noble Friend in the tribute which he had paid to the motives of the late Lord O'Hagan; but, unfortunately, it was admitted by all who had any knowledge of the administration of the law in Ireland that Lord O'Hagan's statute introduced a system which had most seriously interfered with the administration of justice in that country. That was unquestionably not the intention of the noble Lord, whose motives were good, upright, and pure. But the effect of the Act when it first became law was to encumber the books with a great mass of jurors, many of whom were ignorant, many liable to the influence of terror, many liable to have their judgment distorted by sympathy with the accused whom they were to try. The only means left of coping with that state of things was the cumbrous power of changing the venue, and also a power which existed in the Crown in England as well as in Ireland from the earliest time, the power of telling persons who came to take the oath to stand by. One would think, from what was said by those who ought to know better, that that power was a creation of the last few months or years. Not to go to the earliest times, but only to the starting point when Lord O'Hagan's Act was passed, in 1871, that power was familiar to everyone who knew anything about the subject. After Lord O'Hagan's Act was first passed it was common at Assizes after Assizes, and he had seen it himself, to have 50, 60, 80, 90, and 100 persons repeatedly ordered to stand by, not in cases involving political prejudice or passion, but in ordinary cases, in order to get a jury which could be relied upon to do their duty in a fair and decent way. He spoke openly and publicly, and he asserted that was a statement which could not be controverted by anyone

acquainted with the elements of the question. He was speaking of common instances which had occurred 10 or 12 years ago—before the amending Act of 1876 was passed. Take the case of the Phoenix Park murder trial, under the Administration of Lord Spencer, after the amending Act of 1876. What men in the community would dare to say they sympathized with the murders? Could any man suggest a case in which it should have been easier in any state of society to get 12 men into the box who could be trusted to do what was fair between man and man over these brutal and disgraceful murderers? And yet in 1882, or the beginning of 1883, when that trial took place with a special jury panel, what occurred? The trial was conducted by Mr. Porter, the then Attorney General and the present Master of the Rolls in Ireland, than whom a more able man never conducted a case as Crown Counsel or presided as Judge upon the Bench. When that trial took place in Green Street, with a special jury panel of 200 names, it was felt to be absolutely necessary, to enable the Crown to get together a jury that could be trusted to perform its duty independently, fairly, and free from influences that should not enter a jury-box, to order 30, 40, and 50 persons to stand by. With the recent Sligo case everyone was familiar. The Crown ordered 17, 37, 12, 9, and 26 jurors to stand aside, and he had no doubt that in this case the Crown Solicitor was led by a strict sense of duty, by the one object of endeavouring to secure a fair and impartial trial. Indeed, no one had ever argued that there was placed on those juries a single individual who was not a fair, honourable, and upright man. All that could be alleged was that certain men were told to stand aside whom those who had special sympathies with the prisoners would have preferred to serve on the juries. In the late Dublin prosecutions only 28 were told to stand aside, and yet a result was not secured by the agreement of the jury. His noble and learned Friend had shown an anxiety not to say anything which might cast a reflection on the system associated with Lord O'Hagan's name; but he thought he had attributed too much weight to the effect of the changes recommended by the Lords' Committee of 1874. They thought they might improve the posi-

tion by raising the qualification. His noble and learned Friend thought they had largely succeeded. He could not agree with his noble and learned Friend. There was an improvement, but it was not a very substantial one. Evils which previously existed were found still to survive, and accordingly the next Committee, that of the Marquess of Lansdowne in 1881, reported a state of things to exist which showed that the jury system, with their amendments, still presented features which required very cautious examination. The constitution of the Committee of 1881 was very important. It consisted of Members of their Lordships' House, to whose judgment they would pay respect, as well as to their desire of doing what was just and right. The then Lord President of the Council (Earl Spencer) and Lord Carlingford—then Lord Privy Seal—were Members of the Committee, took an active part in its proceedings, and agreed in all its recommendations. One of the strong views formed by the Committee on the evidence was thus expressed in paragraph 17—

"In cases where the disturbing element enters, though the criminal may have been detected having upon his person traces which would leave no doubt as to his guilt, though his identity may have been clearly established, the jury have again and again disagreed and found a verdict of acquittal."

Among the recommendations, which were numerous, were these:—(1) Proposals to facilitate changes of venue and for obtaining special juries; (2) Summary jurisdiction in cases of rioting, aggravated assaults, forcible possession, assaults on process servers and agents of the law, threatening letters, and intimidation. He (Lord Ashbourne) had no doubt that the Committee arrived at those conclusions from a consideration of the evils they had to cope with and of the danger of having men on the jury panel who were warped by sympathy, men liable to intimidation—in fact, men who would not have the independence which every juryman should possess, and therefore not able to discharge their duty with that sense of responsibility which every juryman should bring to the task. He had no doubt that the recommendation of the power of summary jurisdiction was given, to a certain extent, to relieve the jury system by removing certain cases from the purview of juries, and also because it was thought

desirable for the administration of justice and the due maintenance of law and order that there should be in that class of cases some quick and summary punishment—say a certain punishment of six months' imprisonment with hard labour, as more deterrent to the persons likely to indulge in such practices than the dread of a long period of penal servitude which would depend upon a jury which could not be relied upon to convict. Those recommendations had, from time to time, been brought to public notice; they had more or less been embodied in temporary Acts of Parliament, and, while in existence, they had worked well; and there could be no doubt but that, seeing what had taken place in Ireland in recent years, the extra powers were necessary. Had the system improved since 1881? He did not believe that anyone who had listened to the speech of his noble and learned Friend, or had any knowledge of the state of things in Ireland, could have any doubt as to the answer which should be given to that question. It was very desirable to know what had been the teaching of the Nationalist Press in Ireland in reference to jury administration in that country. He would not weary their Lordships with many quotations; but those he did read would show under what difficulties juries had to act in Ireland. The first was from *The Irish World* of December 18, 1886—

"An honestly selected jury of Irishmen could not and would not convict any Irishman of a political offence against British law. . . . Irishmen ought not and would not assist in the administration of laws made by foreigners and enemies in a foreign country, and made for the purpose of exterminating the Irish race. The people of Sligo, for example, will not say that the Woodford farmers were 'guilty' in resisting Clanricarde's attempt to drive them out of their homes, or that John Dillon was 'guilty' in advising them to resist. No one in Sligo would say such action or speech was a crime, except the small minority of Loyalists."

That was the kind of teaching and the sort of spirit in the presence of which juries in Ireland were called upon to do their duty as honest and upright citizens. That teaching required to be very vigilantly watched, and every encouragement should be given to juries who would try to rise above it. The second quotation he wished to make was from *United Ireland* of the 20th of November, 1886, and was as follows:—

"We look to the Irish jurors this winter to teach this cowardly, cut-throat Government of ours a lesson never to be forgotten. The jurors can do it, and we dare swear they will. . . . He (the juror) is responsible only to his own conscience and to his country for his verdict. He tries and is tried, and as he judges others he shall himself be judged."

Their Lordships would be able now to realize something of the great difficulty that was experienced in Ireland in getting an independent jury to fearlessly perform their duty; and they would doubtless have some sympathy with jurors who, after an honest attempt to perform their duty uprightly, returned to their homes with such statements as that confronting them. Another extract he wished to read was the following, from an article in *United Ireland* of December 4, 1886, under the heading of "A True Deliverance":—

"On the juror's shoulders the entire power of deciding, the entire responsibility of the decision, is cast. Whom he binds shall be bound; whom he loosens shall go free. The Judge's claim to bind the juror's conscience by subtle legal technicalities has no root in the Constitution. The juror has taken no oath to yield obedience to his directions; there is no power in the State to compel his obedience. The 'guilty' or the 'not guilty' of the jury is irrevocable and irresistible, let the Judge storm as he may in impotent malice. The most powerful Government and the most tyrannical cannot touch a hair of the prisoner's head while a single resolute and upright juror stands between him and its victim. This is the law—this in England is the practice. England dates some of the most splendid triumphs of her Constitution from the resolute refusal of jurors to submit to judicial dictation. Hitherto the Judges have managed to shroud the deliberations in the jury-box in a veil of mystery, which has been a strong incentive to the form of intimidation to which we advert. The persecuting majority in the jury-box might pose as patriots outside if so disposed. The Judge commands the strictest secrecy. The juror may retort—"I cannot find it in my oath." There is no word of secrecy in the oath. The Grand Jurors—it may be in the interest of genteel jobbery—pledge themselves that 'their fellow jurors' counsel they shall not disclose.' The petit juror binds himself by no such pledge. The marked omission of the words would be in itself an express denial of the existence of such an obligation of silence, and it may well be that the white light of public opinion and the hot fire of public odium are the best remedy for the monstrous abuses that have sprung up in the jury-box under the shelter of the judicially imposed darkness. The most besotted and bloodthirsty juror will, we fancy, moderate his eagerness for conviction if he knows there is a right of appeal from the dark security of the jury-box to the calm judgment of his neighbours in the world outside."

What was the meaning of that extract?

Lord Ashbourne

Was not the first part of it an intimation to jurors to disregard the ruling of the Judge on matters of law—to act in a certain direction regardless of what the law was? And was not the second part of it an encouragement to drag forth from the privacy which should be the protection of a jury the names of those men who were sufficiently courageous to try to do their duty in a conscientious and independent manner? These, then, were the conditions under which they had at the present time to administer the law in Ireland. Mr. John O'Connor, M.P., speaking in front of the Court House, Cork, on the 2nd of December, 1886, said—

"Justice has been polluted within the four walls of the building (pointing to the Court House), and we are here to-night to see that if Tim Hurley is put upon his trial he must have and shall have justice, or we will know for what. . . . We Cork men . . . must insist that Cork jurors will not be made the tools of Mr. Peter O'Brien and the Castle."

It required a great deal of courage for a jury calmly to enter upon deliberation and openly to discharge their duty when this was the kind of atmosphere that was sought to be created around them, and when this was the kind of welcome which was promised them when they left the jury-box and returned to their homes. Were it necessary, he could weary their Lordships with the number of cases in which juries had disagreed or had acquitted prisoners in face of the strongest evidence and the most clear judicial guidance and warning. It was sufficient for him to direct their attention to the case the noble and learned Lord had referred to, which took place before Mr. Justice O'Brien at the Clare Assizes, and had just been reported in *The Times*. In the words of the Judge—as able, upright, and independent a Judge as there was on the Irish Bench—it was a failure of justice, in spite, presumably, of the clearest evidence. The Counsel for the Crown brought under the attention of the Judge the fact that there were similar cases yet to be tried; and Mr. Justice O'Brien said that, having regard to what took place on the previous day, it was his fixed opinion that nothing but a complete failure of justice would ensue if the cases were heard, and accordingly the cases were postponed to the next Assizes. No jurors could be blamed if they felt anxious after the treatment which some of them had received for

acting independently and with a regard to the loyalty of their oath. The noble and learned Lord had referred to the treatment to which jurors in Ireland were subjected who had sought to do their duty. Let their Lordships take the Sligo case, in regard to which it had been openly stated that the Roman Catholic jurors had been sought out for the purpose of being Boycotted. Even two triers—men who, under the direction of the Judge, performed the function of ascertaining whether the panel was constructed according to law, had been subjected to every form of abuse—their names had been published broadcast, and things done which was certainly not intended to add to their comfort. Moreover, the noble and learned Lord had referred to what took place in Cork. A notice was sent to the farmers of Kerry, which showed the methods of intimidation which were adopted. It was an absolute threat of outrage in cases where jurors endeavoured to discharge honestly the obligations of their oath. The notice was as follows:—

“To the farmers of Kerry.—At the late Cork Winter Assizes a large number of men were convicted of charges of “moonlighting” on the notoriously false evidence of police witnesses. Among the pliant jurors who did the work of the Crown were to be found two Kerry men, viz., ———— and ————, with whom the people of Kerry have had extensive dealings in the butter trade. Farmers of Kerry, will you continue during the coming season to send butter to these worse than horrid men? You have other men in the Cork Butter Exchange in your own county who would disdain to do the dirty work which ———— and ———— have done, and why not patronize them instead? If you don't do as requested and Boycott those of the Crown you will be coerced into doing so. Do it voluntarily or severe measures will be taken to compel you. There are plenty of men still in Kerry prepared to follow in the footsteps of those whom ———— and ———— have helped to send to a convict cell, and who will not stick at trifles to obtain revenge.—(Signed) Captain MOONLIGHT.”

It was in this way that jurors were intimidated by adopting every means to make the lives of those who honestly discharged their duties a burden to them. Under these circumstances, he (Lord Ashbourne) thought it was plain that the present jury system in Ireland was open to the charges that had been suggested by his noble and learned Friend; it did not secure the due and adequate administration of the law that was called for in the interests of the

country. Take the murders that had recently occurred in Southern Counties; if men were returned for trial no one could, under the present jury system, anticipate results which would satisfy the requirements of public justice. Take the system of Boycotting which was prevalent in so many parts of Ireland. The system was cowardly, mean, inhuman, and brutal; it was a scandal and a disgrace to the people who were a party to it. It was a gangrene that eat into the moral life of the nation; it was a cancer, that undermined all respect for the law. The cases were so numerous that it was difficult to make selections. In the Curtin case Boycotting had amounted to a prolonged agony of barbarism against a family whose solitary offence was that the head of the family had been coldly murdered—the husband in the presence of his wife, and the father in the presence of his children. There was absolutely no other reason to be assigned for the horrible conduct towards the family. Take the case at Mitchelstown of Lady Kingston, who had displayed indomitable courage while exposed to great injustice. According to all evidence, the estate had been well-managed, and she had been distinguished for the kindness she had shown to the tenants; who were satisfied until they were got at by agitators, and since then Lady Kingston had been subjected to Boycotting, which she was living through with courage and determination. She had already succeeded in breaking some of those who had Boycotted her. Take the case of the unfortunate man Murphy, who, having been murdered, had with difficulty been laid in the grave within the last few days. He was murdered for reasons which he himself could not guess or speculate about, regardless of the agony and despair of those made a widow and orphans. No wonder there were discontent and dissatisfaction at such a state of things existing and being permitted to exist in Ireland. It would be startling to make the discovery that such a state of things existed in a civilized country. Was it not appalling that, with such a state of things, delays were encouraged and pretexts were put forward to prevent remedies being applied? Those who, by speech or by letter, endeavoured to postpone the time when such a state of things could be adequately grappled with, could not be

startled if a harsh and clear judgment was passed on their acts. The fact that the jury system was the pivot of law and order, and of the administration of justice in Ireland gave value and interest to this discussion, and the jury system was almost paralyzed. Men who excused this state of facts must be taken to be palliators. It was sought to justify these facts by stating that an excuse was to be found in some rents being too high, and that it would be possible in some cases if landlords chose to exact rents that were too high. One did not know what words to use that would adequately describe a suggestion of this kind offered as an excuse. Was it not notorious that the landlords had carried concession to such a point that they could hardly go further. Could you point to a property of any kind in Ireland where the sole question was, not whether there was concession, but how much the concession had been? The Irish landlords did not need any defence from him; they found their defence in the convictions of every honest and fair-minded man. They had been kind, forbearing, and considerate. They had shown in this present crisis, wherever it was needed, and over and over again where it was not needed, every desire to make the fullest and the most ample concession. It was said these scandals existed because Ireland had not Home Rule. That was not only nonsense, but it was criminal nonsense. If a people broke some of the Ten Commandments, that was no reason why you should hand over to them the power of having no Commandments at all. It was a very novel way of dealing with crime to say you would not deal with crime until you had done something to satisfy those who committed crimes. The Government had acted and would act with determination and courage with such powers as were at their disposal; and they would, when the opportunity was offered them, and when it was permitted to them, ask for such further powers as they might think necessary. When they had those further powers they would use them with a sense of justice, with fairness, with firmness, and with courage. His noble and learned Friend asked whether the Government intended to submit any proposals to Parliament, and his answer was that when the Government got the

opportunity—which seemed to be sedulously denied them by those who knew better—they would be ready to submit proposals which would enable crime to be punished, and thus restore law and order in Ireland where they had been interfered with. And of this he was confident, that when the Government did submit these proposals they would be sustained by the entire public opinion of the country, which had watched the proceedings that were now going on, understood the difficulty of the situation, and was determined that in this matter justice and right should be done.

EGYPT—THE NATIVE EGYPTIAN ARMY.

MOTION FOR A PAPER.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY, in rising to move for a Return of a—

“Despatch addressed to Sir H. Drummond Wolff by Lieutenant-Colonel Parr from the headquarters of the Egyptian Army at Cairo, dated 17 January, 1886, in reference to the efficiency and gallantry of the native Egyptian troops, and the friendly relations now existing between the English officers serving in the army of the Khedive and the native officers and men,”

said, he had observed that in many quarters there was a disposition to regard the fellaheen as mere beasts of burden and poor and worthless creatures; and the despatch he moved for conveyed a very different and far more accurate view of the labouring population of Egypt. It showed that the great mass of the Native Troops were strong and vigorous, and that the class from which they were drawn might be safely trusted to defend their country. He ventured to suggest that the paper was well worthy their Lordships' consideration and study. If they did that it would enable them to remedy two injustices which had been done—one, the injustice to the Native Egyptian working class as a material for a real solid army, and the other to the distinguished British officers who had created a Native Army. The Paper would tend very much to remove that feeling of hopelessness about Egypt which was in the public mind of this country, at any rate upon one important point—that a Native Army might be raised from a sound, solid, reliable agricultural class which were capable, under proper management, of defending their own country. He hoped, in con-

clusion, that it would not be supposed that in saying this he wished to accelerate the departure of the English troops from Egypt. He considered nothing could be more foolish on the part of anybody who wished success to English interests in Egypt to constantly suggest their possible sudden departure.

Moved for—

“Despatch addressed to Sir H. Drummond Wolff by Lieutenant-Colonel Parr from the headquarters of the Egyptian Army at Cairo, dated 17th January, 1886, in reference to the efficiency and gallantry of the native Egyptian troops, and the friendly relations now existing between the English officers serving in the army of the Khedive and the native officers and men.”—(*The Earl of Harrowby.*)

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): I hope that my noble Friend will not press his Motion, because I am informed that the despatch has been laid on the Table quite recently, and therefore it will be open to your Lordships to examine it. I quite agree in the motives which have induced my noble Friend to urge that this despatch should be more read. A very great injustice has been done to the fellaheen undoubtedly in the past. I remember one battle, I think El Teb—one of the early battles on the coast of the Red Sea—in which some of those who reported the action spoke of the fellaheen as being men who were destitute of the natural instinct which all other men possessed of defending their own country and their own lives. They were said to lay down their arms and submit themselves to be slaughtered without resistance. Whatever the justification for that particular report may be, I agree that this despatch to which my noble Friend refers, and the intelligence we generally receive, justifies us in believing that that is not a fair description of the labouring population of Egypt; that they have as much courage in the defence of their own homes and their own interests, if they are allowed by good government to gain an affection for those homes and interests, as any other race of men; and that under the guidance of British officers and with proper discipline they will make very good, reliable, honest, and brave troops. The more I think that our officers are acquainted with the people of Egypt, the more highly do

they value the qualities which those people possess; but unfortunately many years—I may almost say many centuries—of misgovernment have condemned them to obscurity.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

WALES (CHURCH OF ENGLAND)—REVENUE OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY.—MOTION FOR A RETURN.

THE EARL OF POWIS moved for a

“Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the bishops, chapters, archdeacons, &c., in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales.”

EARL STANHOPE, on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, had no objection to such a Return being granted.

Motion *agreed to.*

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 23.)

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, “That the Bill be now read 3^d.”—(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

LORD DENMAN, in moving to reject the Bill, said: My Lords, when in 1823, with Mr. Brougham and Mr. Denman, in Scotland, Mr. Ferguson of Raith, an old Member of Parliament, said he never knew a speech gain a vote. Therefore, I can only show that I do not join in giving a *bene discessit* to this Bill. In 1820 the Solicitor General, for Queen Caroline, denied that any correspondent had ever been called as a witness. The Attorney General for King George IV. said, that in Major Hook’s case in the House of Lords, such a witness had been called. I have looked into the Journals of the House, and find that one Campbell, who had been adjudged to pay damages in an action for criminal conversation, had been called as a witness to disprove adultery and had not been believed. Mr. Bradlaugh is anxious to arraign the Corporation of the City of London on oath. I am sorry for him; because only the casting vote of the right hon. Spencer Walpole prevented him from being allowed to affirm. I believe that this Bill may do great

harm, and I wish that County Court Judges and those who witness the cases of interested parties under examination may be asked to give their experience on the subject. Two cases lately have each occupied about 13 days. Noble Lords may sneer and snub me, and when they contemptuously turn their backs upon me when beginning to speak, I feel inclined to retaliate. I am determined to force your Lordships to pay respect to the opinions of my Predecessor, and move the rejection of the Bill.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Denman*.)

On Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion?

Resolved in the Affirmative.

Bill read 3^a accordingly; and *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

"DISSENTIENTE."

"1. Because the shortening of causes and the prevention of too numerous (and not continuous) adjournments, are far more 'expedient' than the admission of interested and suspicious evidence.

"2. Because the evidence of a wife living with her husband is so controlled by her affection for her husband that it could not be relied upon.

"3. Because the whole spirit of our laws has been founded on precautions and evidence that certain men and women (even on oath) could not be relied on has often been given.

"4. Because in cases of divorce a husband or co-respondent should not be admitted, if the case can be proved or disproved without them, and should only be admissible by the special order of the President or Judge trying the cause.

"5. Because only when in danger of being deprived of just earnings or of assault by a separated or brutal husband should a wife be admitted as a witness.

"6. Because the general rule that a man or woman cannot be required to bear witness against himself or herself is in danger of being broken down, if even in previous unauthorized interrogations by magistrates or policemen *endangered*, and every prisoner would necessarily feel that a refusal to *answer* natural and pertinent interrogatories put by *judicial* authority would be itself a strong proof of guilt.—See *Heart of Mid Lothian*, Chap. XXII.

"7. Because since 1824, when an article on Preuves Judiciaires appeared in the *Edinburgh*

Lord Denman

Review, the admission of interested (and in few cases accused) witnesses has so increased, that restriction rather than enlargement of preposterous evidence ought to be carefully devised.

"8. Because the question of both a prosecution and an action being lawful in some cases, does not justify the great change in the law proposed by this Bill.

"DENMAN."

House adjourned at a quarter past Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 4th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Admiralty and War Office, *appointed*.

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee—Resolution [March 3] reported.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Metropolitan District Railway.*

PUBLIC BILL—*Ordered—First Reading*—Rivers Pollution Prevention Act (1876) Amendment* [188].

QUESTIONS.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881—AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1881—1886.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether his attention has been called to the—

"Return of the value of live stock and crops, showing the numbers, at various ages, of cattle and sheep, and the estimated produce of the crops, with the average prices of each year and of each kind from 1881 to 1886,"

prepared for the Royal Commission on "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881," and mentioned at page 9 of the Report of the said Commission; and, whether he would consent to a similar Return being prepared for England and Wales, so as to assist landowners and tenant farmers in effecting equitable re-adjustments of rents?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (LORD JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.) asked the hon. Member to be kind enough to postpone the Question for a few days, as the evidence taken before the Royal Commission, and the details

referred to in the Question, had not yet been submitted to the Government.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—MEDALS FOR VOLUNTEER NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, having regard to the fact that it is the custom to reward Volunteer Officers for long service by giving them a step of honorary rank, he will take under his consideration the expediency of granting to Volunteer non-commissioned officers and privates a medal or other decoration for similar length of service?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): On the 20th of April, 1883, the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), then Secretary of State for War, stated, in reply to a similar Question, that as the Volunteers were already allowed to wear a star for every five years of efficient service, it was unnecessary and inexpedient to issue a medal or badge for long service; and that medals should be restricted to war service, long and meritorious Army service, and saving life. I see no reason for differing in any way from that opinion.

INDIA (RAILWAYS)—BENGAL-NAGPUR RAILWAY.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If it is true, in connection with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, that £3,000,000 are to be raised on the guaranteed interest of 4 per cent in perpetuity by the Indian Government and one-fourth of the profits of the railway; whether the loan was underwritten by Messieurs Rothschild and Company; whether Messieurs Rothschild and Company were paid any commission in connection with floating the loan; what was the amount of remuneration paid to the said firm; and, why was the money raised in this mode?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): My answer to the first Question is Yes; to the second, No. The Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company was authorized to pay a commission of 1 per cent to Messrs. Rothschild & Co.; and the amount was,

in fact, paid. The money was raised in this mode, because, in the opinion of the Secretary of State in Council, it was the most judicious and economical mode of raising it.

DR. TANNER: Might I ask what connection Messrs. Rothschild & Co. have with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company?

SIR JOHN GORST: I think the hon. Member will have to ask the Question of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company.

"POST OFFICE PATRONAGE"—SUB-OFFICE, BUTE STREET, CARDIFF.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the facts stated in a letter to *The Daily News*, of Tuesday 1st March, under the heading Post Office Patronage, and signed "A Looker On," are correct, namely—

"That in the case of removal of a sub-office in Bute Street, Cardiff, and the appointment to the new sub-office of a Postmaster, that the site of the latter has been chosen with the object of suiting the convenience of a few, and is objected to by the majority of the people;"

whether, although several local tradesmen applied for the Postmastership the post was conferred upon a foreigner; and, whether the said foreigner was the only Conservative candidate for the position?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The nomination to the post-office in Bute Street, Cardiff, was made in the ordinary course by the Lords of the Treasury. I have ascertained that the person who has been nominated is, in all respects, fit for the appointment. He has been in business in Cardiff for 40 years, and his premises are not more than 40 yards distant from the former office. I have no knowledge of the politics of the person nominated, nor do I know if there were any other applicants, as I had nothing to do with the selection.

DR. TANNER: Was he a foreigner?

MR. RAIKES: I do not know. I have been informed that he has been upwards of 40 years in business in Cardiff. I did not nominate him or select him for the appointment.

MERCANTILE MARINE—LICENCES FOR FOREIGN PILOTS.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade,

Whether it is the intention of the Board to abolish the system of licences for foreign pilots in British waters; and, whether he has any reason to believe that such action may provoke retaliation on the part of Foreign Governments?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Question turns upon a point of law, and also on international agreements. It is still under consideration by the Government.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—DELIVERY BETWEEN DRUMLISH AND FARNAUGHT, CO. LEITRIM.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he will make inquiry into the necessity of establishing a daily postal delivery between Drumlish and Farnaught, County Leitrim, instead of the tri-weekly delivery now existing, and take steps to relieve the people of the district from the great inconvenience caused by the present arrangement?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I will, with pleasure, make further inquiry into the subject; but I may mention that in 1884, when the matter was last considered, it appeared that the service three days a-week was not self-supporting.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — PROCLAMATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether there is any difference between the powers and duties of Resident and Ordinary Magistrates in Ireland in relation to the proclamation or suppression of public meetings in that country; and, if so, in what such difference consists?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: There is no difference.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACTS—CONSOLIDATION.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked Mr. Attorney General, If Her Majesty's Government propose to introduce a Bill to consolidate the Merchandise Marks Act of 1862

with the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill, so as to present in one and the same measure the whole of the existing law relating to merchandise marks, and the proposed amendments and additions thereto?

MR. LEES (Oldham) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether Her Majesty's Government intend to introduce a Bill to consolidate the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill with the Act of 1862?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Yes; I propose to take the necessary steps to consolidate the law on the subject as soon as possible consistently with the Forms of the House.

DOGS—LIABILITY FOR SHOOTING STRAY DOGS.

MR. McLAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a Resolution of the Warrington Farmers' Club re-affirming their grievances arising from the state of the law regarding stray dogs, and showing that it is no remedy to shoot the dog after the damage is done; whether it is true that a gamekeeper may shoot a dog in pursuit of a hare to save the hare's life, but a farmer may not shoot a dog in pursuit of a sheep or a cow until injury has been done; whether it is the law that every dog is entitled to one bite before it can be legally destroyed, even if the farmer has reason to believe it is dangerous; and, whether, considering the damage which farmers suffer, he will endeavour to alter the law, so as to give farmers the right to protect themselves and shoot dangerous stray dogs?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have seen an account of the proceedings referred to at the Warrington Farmers' Club. As to the second and third paragraphs of the hon. Member's Question, it is no part of my duty to give legal opinions in this House; but I believe both those paragraphs to be inaccurate statements of the law. As I informed the hon. Member a short time ago, I believe the existing law is sufficient to enable farmers to protect themselves and their property against dangerous stray dogs; and I have no intention of introducing a Bill on the subject.

POOR LAW—LAW OF SETTLEMENT
AND REMOVAL.

MR. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he has considered the present state of the law relating to the settlement and removal of the poor, in view of the hardship entailed on the poor themselves and expense to the rate-payers; and, whether he is willing to introduce some amendment to remedy the chief objections?

THE PRESIDENT (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am afraid that I cannot hold out any hope to my hon. Friend that I shall be able to propose any legislation with regard to defects in the Law of Settlement during the present Session.

HE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SUPER-
SESSION OF SIR THOMAS ESMONDE,
HIGH SHERIFF OF WATERFORD CO.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Lords Justices of Ireland have assigned the alleged illegality of the Plan of Campaign as the cause for the supersession of Sir Thomas Esmonde in the office of High Sheriff of the county of Waterford; whether two of the three Lords Justices who superseded Sir Thomas Esmonde—namely, Lord Ashbourne and Lord Justice Fitzgibbon—are members of the Appellate Court by which any appeal as to the legality of the Plan of Campaign would have to be determined; and, whether care will be taken in future not to select for the office of Lord Justice in Ireland any judicial person who, by virtue of his power as a Judge, would be in a position to reverse his own conduct as Lord Justice?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The Lords Justices of Ireland, two of whom are members of the Appellate Court, have assigned as the cause for the supersession of Sir Thomas Esmonde the illegality of the Plan of Campaign, as to which no doubt exists. Of course, questions may arise as to the criminality of individuals engaging in it; but such questions can never come for decision before the Appellate Court.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMI-
NAL PROSECUTION—THE PRIVY
COUNCIL.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the recent statement of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland that the Irish Privy Council is never consulted on the subject of any criminal prosecution, Upon what matter the Irish Privy Council advises the Irish Government, and by whom the Irish Government is advised with respect to the initiation of any special criminal proceedings?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The Irish Government is advised with respect to criminal proceedings by Her Majesty's Law Officers for Ireland. The functions of the Privy Council are confined to advising the Lord Lieutenant on matters as to which they are directed to advise by various Acts of Parliament.

HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES—
THE WALTHAM WATCH MANUFAC-
TURING CO.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Messrs. Robbins and Appleton, agents in this country of the Waltham Watch Manufacturing Company, who, having an order for Australia for 400 Waltham watches, and having the movements in their possession, and desiring to have them cased in this country, unhall-marked, but, in American style, marked "sterling 925.1000," applied to the Goldsmiths' Company for permission to have the order executed; whether such permission was refused, on the ground that it was illegal for any watch case manufacturers in the United Kingdom to be exempted from the compulsory obligation of assay and hall-marking; whether, as a consequence, the order had to be executed in America, to the loss of English watch case makers of an order for 400 cases, and an estimated loss of 10,000 cases per annum; whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency, in the interest of British

industry, of abolishing the compulsory obligation of assay of watch cases manufactured in the United Kingdom for export abroad; whether he is aware that parts of the works of watches are made abroad, and put together sometimes with other parts made in this country, and that the Merchandize Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill makes no provision for such cases; and, whether the Government intend to introduce any amendments to apply to them; and, if so, how they will be dealt with?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have not had their attention called to the case referred to by the hon. Member, and they are informed that no such application has been made to the Goldsmiths' Company as is stated in the Question. The rest of the Question of the hon. Member refers to matters which can be better explained when the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill is in Committee, than dealt with in the form of an answer to a question now.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRAWLING, 1885.

MR. E. W. BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether any steps have been taken to carry out the following recommendations of the Royal Commission on Trawling, 1885:—That a central authority be created to supervise and control the fisheries of Great Britain, if not of the United Kingdom, and that a sum of money be annually granted for the purpose of conducting scientific experiments and for collecting fishery statistics; that, in the meantime, powers be given to the Scotch Fishery Board similar to those of the Irish Board, enabling them to make bye-laws for the regulation or suspension of beam trawling, or of any other mode of fishing, within territorial waters; that a similar authority, with similar powers, be created for England, and that, in the meantime, those powers be conferred on the Secretary of State or President of the Board of Trade; whether he is aware of the vast amount of damage steam trawling continues to inflict on in-shore fishermen; and, whether he will exercise or apply for powers to procure its regulation or suspension?

Mr. Kimber

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The following steps have been taken to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Trawling. A Fisheries Department for England has recently been created at the Board of Trade to act as a central authority in certain matters relating to the fisheries. A sum of £500 per annum has been taken for the collection of fishery statistics, and a similar amount is to be allowed annually, subject to certain conditions, to the Marine Biological Association for the purpose of conducting scientific experiments at the laboratory now in course of erection at Plymouth. Powers have been given to the Fishery Board for Scotland by the Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1885, to make bye-laws for the regulation or suspension of beam trawling, or any method of fishing for sea-fish within territorial waters in any part of the sea adjoining Scotland. The question of applying for similar powers for England is receiving consideration in connection with certain representations which have been made to the Board of Trade as to the damage inflicted on in-shore fishermen by steam trawling.

GLEBE LAND PURCHASERS (IRELAND).

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government intend to take any steps to relieve the distressed condition of the Irish Glebe Land Purchasers, in accordance with the hopes held out by him to the deputation on the subject in December last, either by the capitalization of arrears, so as to bring the Glebe Purchasers under the 24th section of the Supplementary Clauses of the Land Purchase Act, or by the advance of the fourth part of the purchase money, originally paid in cash, on the same terms as those granted to purchasers under Lord Ashbourne's Act; and, whether the Government will act in the same manner to the purchasers under the Bright Clauses of the Land Act of 1870 with respect to the third of the purchase money originally paid by them in cash?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin Uni-

versity) (who replied) said: The subject is still under consideration.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH EXTENSION, CO. DONEGAL.

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether a Commissioner has been deputed by the Post Office authorities to report on the most practicable route for the extension of the telegraph from Dunfanaghy to Burton Port and Dungloe, County Donegal; and, whether there is any possibility of such an extension being carried out?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg leave to state that the question of extending the telegraph to Burton Port and Dungloe has been under the consideration of the Government; but it has been decided not to make the extension at present.

VACCINATION — CUMULATED PENALTIES—CASE OF CHARLES HAYWARD.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether Charles Hayward, mechanic, of Willesborough, has during the last two years, on the prosecution of the Ashford Board of Guardians, been 23 times summoned and 12 times convicted, with penalties and costs amounting to £17 0s. 6d., for refusing to have his child vaccinated; whether Charles Hayward before the magistrates pleaded as his conscientious excuse the risk of his child being inoculated with syphilitic disease; and, whether the Local Government Board can restrain further proceedings against Charles Hayward by the Ashford Board of Guardians?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I understand that Mr. Hayward has been fined 10 times in respect of one child and twice in respect of another. He appears to have urged before the Justices as a reason for the non-vaccination of the children his fear of their being injured by vaccination. The Board have communicated to the Guardians their views on the general question of repeated prosecutions as embodied in the Evesham letter, to the effect that, in their opinion—

“When in a particular case repeated prosecutions have failed in their object, it becomes necessary to carefully consider the question whether the continuance of a fruitless contest with the parent may not have a tendency to produce mischievous results, by exciting sympathy with the person prosecuted, and thus creating a more extended opposition to the law.”

The Board cannot, however, intervene further.

MAURITIUS—SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, What position Sir John Pope Hennessy now occupies in the Mauritius; and, when the Papers relating to his suspense from the Government of the Colony will be laid upon the Table?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Sir John Pope Hennessy, who has been suspended by Sir Hercules Robinson from the administration of the government of Mauritius pending the consideration of his Report on the charges brought against Sir John Pope Hennessy has been directed to come to this country and give his explanations. I conclude, therefore, that he has left Mauritius. He will receive half the salary of Governor until his case is decided. With respect to the second paragraph of the Question, the right hon. and learned Member will see that Papers could not be laid on the Table until Her Majesty's Government have arrived at a decision upon the case.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) inquired whether Mr. Clifford Lloyd was in England in regard to the same matter?

SIR HENRY HOLLAND: Mr. Clifford Lloyd came home on sick leave, and his coming had nothing at all to do with this case.

NAVY—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—CUTLASSES AND SWORD-BAYONETS — H.M.S. “ACORN.”

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the cutlasses supplied to Her Majesty's Ship *Acorn*, commissioned for service on the West Coast of Africa, have been found to be defective; and what steps are being taken to replace admittedly defective weapons by others which satisfy

the existing official tests, if such tests are more severe than those which were considered sufficient in the year 1871? The hon. Gentleman also asked, whether it was the case that an order had been sent to the Small Arms Factory at Enfield to at once discontinue the testing of sword-bayonets and cutlasses for the Navy, on the ground that they were all too soft for use?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): No Report as to the cutlasses supplied to Her Majesty's ship *Acorn* has been received at the Admiralty. The cutlasses being War Office stores, I am unable to say what steps it is proposed to take to replace defective weapons.

VACCINATION—MR. ROBERT KING, EVINGTON.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether, on 24th February, 1886, a fine, amounting with costs to 22s. 6d., was imposed by the Leicester County Magistrates on Mr. Robert King, of Mere Road, Evington, for refusal to have a child vaccinated; whether, on 3rd May, 1886, the child in question died, the fine in the meantime not having been enforced; whether on 28th February this year, Mr. King was visited by a police sergeant, who told him that unless the above fine was paid by 2nd March his goods would be distrained; and, whether he will take steps to prevent the enforcement of fines on account of dead children?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have no information as to the particular case referred to; but as it would appear that the fine was imposed for non-compliance with the law, the Board have no jurisdiction in the matter.

IRELAND—THE "DEATH DUTIES" ON LAND IN ULSTER.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, owing to the custom of the sale of tenant-right and the local and competitive value of the right of occupation in Ulster, land in Ulster is subjected to more than double the amount of Death Duties levied out of land of equal value elsewhere in the Three Kingdoms; and, whether, in his

financial arrangements, he can see his way to remedy the grievance alleged to exist? The hon. Member explained that the expression "land of equal value" in the Question meant "land of the same quality."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, this appeared to him to be a subject of some intricacy, and one which required explanation. With the permission of the hon. Member, he was anxious to defer giving him an answer until he had taken an opportunity of consulting the Inland Revenue and the Irish Authorities.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) —APPOINTMENT OF MEDICAL OFFICERS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it has been the practice to appoint medical officers attached to post offices upon the recommendation of the Secretary to the Post Office; and, whether, in some instances recently, the Postmaster General has set aside the Secretary's recommendations in favour of persons nominated to him through other than official channels?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The practice, as I understand, has been to submit to the Postmaster General the names of several medical gentlemen recommended by the local officers, and one of these gentlemen has usually been formally recommended by the Secretary. But the Postmaster General has always exercised his own judgment in making the appointment. There is no ground for suggesting that the Secretary's recommendation has been slighted in any case where I have made an appointment upon other local information.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — BELFAST AND CO. DOWN RAILWAY COMPANY.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the following statement, made by Mr. Kelly, Chairman of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company, at the last half-yearly meeting of the Company, held at Belfast on the 15th February:—

"They (the Directors) had applied to the Post Office for a very moderate increase in the remuneration for giving increased accommodation to their district which the district required, and the various towns, Downpatrick, Newtownards, and Newcastle; but the sum offered by the Post Office for the improved service was most inadequate. Of course they were anxious to give every advantage to the district served by the railway; but, at the same time, they could not give increased accommodation at a loss to themselves;"

at what time was this application made to the Postal Authorities; what was the amount of the "moderate increase in the remuneration" required by the Company, also the amount offered to the Company for the improved service; and, at what date definite arrangements will be made to provide the people of these important towns with proper postal accommodation?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): My attention had not previously been called to the statement of the Chairman of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company to which the hon. Member refers. For some time past negotiations have been going on between the Department and the Railway Company respecting the Mail Service; and I am expecting shortly to receive further Reports from Ireland upon the subject. But whilst these negotiations are pending, I do not think it would be for the public interest if I were to enter into any detailed statement on the subject.

IRELAND—SUBORNATION OF INFORMATION—HEAD-CONSTABLE MAURICE O'HALLORAN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the payment by Head Constable Maurice O'Halloran, of Ennis, of £10 to one Patrick Loughrey for information, Whether he is aware that *The Cork Daily Herald* of the 1st December last, contained an article citing statements made by Loughrey to the effect that he had given no information; that he had had no information to give; that, after consultation with friends, he took the £10 note from the Head Constable in order to discover the full extent of his purpose; and that, before giving him the money, the Head Constable said to him—

"Prepare yourself now, keep steady and cool, and carry on outrages, and let me know the

time and place. Then I want you to go to work as soon as the new organization comes out, to give me a full idea of it;"

and, whether the Irish Executive will now investigate the case?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: When this Question appeared on the Paper the Chief Secretary for Ireland made inquiry into the subject, and the result of the inquiry was that the statement in *The Cork Daily Herald* did not represent correctly what occurred. Under these circumstances, the hon. Member will see that no further inquiry is necessary.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES) — MR. GEORGE FYDELL ROWLEY, HIGH SHERIFF OF RUTLANDSHIRE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If Mr. George FydeLL Rowley, Conservative candidate for the borough of Boston in the General Election of 1880, who was reported by the Royal Commission which inquired into the Boston election as having been guilty of systematic and extensive bribery of electors, who was, in consequence of that Report, deprived of the Commission of the Peace, and who is still subject to legal disabilities, has been appointed High Sheriff of Rutlandshire for the present year; and, whether, if so, he will be superseded in the office of High Sheriff of Rutlandshire?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): It is not proposed to submit the name of Mr. Rowley to Her Majesty as High Sheriff of Rutland.

MR. SEXTON inquired whether Mr. Rowley had been nominated to the office?

MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member is, doubtless, aware that nominations take place years beforehand by anticipation; and he must also be aware that Mr. Rowley has disqualified himself for the office.

VACCINATION—INQUIRY BY THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL (Hackney, S.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, If he will lay upon the Table of the House or furnish particulars of the exhaustive examination into the Vaccination Question,

which in debate on Supply in September he alleged to have been made (about two years ago) by the Royal Statistical Society, such investigation being given as the reason why the Government would not assent to the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Vaccination Question?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am somewhat surprised that the hon. and learned Member should put to me his Question in the shape in which it stands on the Paper. I cannot think that the hon. and learned Gentleman has himself prepared the Question; but, whether he has done so, or has received the Question from some other source, it is evident that he has not, by reference to the debate alluded to, made himself acquainted with the facts of the case. It is not true that I made the statement alluded to in the Question as to the reason why the Government would not assent to the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Vaccination Question. Not only did I not give it as the reason, but I did not give it even as a reason why I declined to assent to the inquiry demanded. The reason given by me for refusing the inquiry was that the Government already possessed accurate information upon the subject; and that if they consented to the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry they did not believe that it would have the least effect in removing the objections of those who at present resisted the law, while, on the other hand, it might have the effect of implying doubts on the part of the Government which the Government did not feel in the slightest degree. It is true that I, after giving that reason, used the following words:—

“I may add that only two years ago an exhaustive inquiry was made by the Statistical Society, not only into cases arising in this country, but all over the world, and they came to the conclusion that the benefits of vaccination were undoubted.”—(3 *Hansard*, [309] 54.)

This statement was not, afterwards found, strictly accurate. It was not an inquiry, but a discussion, which took place at the Statistical Society. I made this statement at the suggestion of an hon. Friend of mine sitting near me, who, while I was on my legs, twice requested me to make this statement to

the House. But it in no way formed part of my argument, or any portion of the reason why the Government refused the inquiry.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL asked whether the Report of the discussion was published in the form of a pamphlet?

MR. RITCHIE: It appeared in the publications of the Statistical Society. No doubt any hon. Member can get a copy by applying for it.

RAILWAYS (INDIA)—BORROWING POWERS—LEGISLATION.

MR. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Government contemplate introducing during the present Session a Bill similar to that introduced last year by the late Government, to enable the Secretary of State for India, in Council, to borrow money in London for the purposes of Indian railways; and, if so, when the Bill is likely to be introduced, and if he could state what amount is proposed to be authorised by the Bill, and what proportion of such amount is likely to be raised during the current year?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): A Bill relating to the borrowing of money for Indian Railways was prepared by the late Government, and its object explained by Mr. Stafford Howard, on the 11th of June, 1886. The question of proceeding with this measure is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State.

GRANTS TO THE ROYAL FAMILY—A SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he is now prepared to state what course the Government intend to adopt with reference to the promise of a Select Committee to consider the question of Grants to the Royal Family, given by the Government of the day in 1885, on the Vote for an Annuity to the Princess Beatrice?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is the intention of the Government to ask the House to appoint a Committee to consider this important question later in the Session.

Sir Charles Russell

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE BUILDINGS— THE COMPETITION.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the fact that only a few architects have been selected to prepare competitive plans for the proposed Imperial Institute Building, and that no competitors have been selected from Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and other great representative towns; and, if so, who is responsible for this restriction upon such competition; and, whether any and what steps can be taken to secure an open competition for this Memorial Institute?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The question of the Imperial Institute is not in any way connected with Her Majesty's Government. We have no authority whatever to interfere with the course which the Committee may deem it fit to pursue. Therefore, I am quite unable to give the hon. Member any information on the subject.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881, AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he can indicate the probable period when the Government propose to give legislative effect to the Report of Lord Cowper's Commission on the Irish Land Question, or do they intend to act on all, or how many, of its recommendations; and, do the Government propose to proceed first with the Land Bill or a Coercion Bill?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Her Majesty's Government are fully alive to the urgent necessity of legislation for Ireland; but they adhere to the view they have expressed—that the changes in the Rules of Procedure which are under consideration are essential to any effective legislation in this House. My answer, therefore, to the hon. and learned Gentleman is that if he, and the hon. Gentlemen who act with him, would co-operate with us in arriving at a conclusion on that matter, I should then be in a position to state to the House when the Government will make

their proposals to Parliament, and what the nature of those proposals will be.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to give an answer to the latter portion of my Question—Do the Government propose to proceed first with the Land Bill or a Coercion Bill?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I think I have already answered that Question by saying that when we are in a position to proceed with Business at all, we will state frankly and boldly to the House what our proposals will be on all the subjects with which we intend to deal.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—RULES OF PROCEDURE.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) wished to ask, Whether, considering the great expenditure of time which had taken place already on the first Rule of Procedure, the right hon. Gentleman would take practical steps in order to secure that the time of the House should not be further wasted?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am, as the hon. Member is aware, entirely in the hands of the House. I must leave it to the sense, judgment, and good feeling of the House to assist me in furthering the consideration of the Rules of Procedure, which I believe to be essential for the proper conduct of the affairs of this House.

RIGHT OF PUBLIC MEETING (ENG- LAND AND IRELAND)—THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN—SUPPRESSION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Attorney General a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether, after the declarations of himself and the Attorney General for Ireland last night as to the identity of the law relating to public meetings in both countries, and the determination of the Government, as announced by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, to disperse by force meetings in Ireland in connection with the Plan of Campaign, the Government intend to disperse meetings called in England in support of the Plan of Campaign?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I only received Notice of the Question on

coming to the House five minutes ago, and I do not intend to answer the argumentative part of it. But I desire to say that it is impossible to decide whether a meeting is illegal until the purposes for, and circumstances under which it is called, are known. If, however, the law is broken in England, as it has undoubtedly been in Ireland, steps will certainly be taken to enforce it.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to give Notice to the Attorney General that I intend to-morrow to address a meeting in England in favour of the Plan of Campaign.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [EIGHTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended,

“That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, ‘That the Question be now put.’ Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

“When the Motion ‘That the Question be now put,’ has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part of, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

“Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members.”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

And which Amendment was,

In line 1, by inserting after the word “proposed,” the words “a Member rising in his place may claim to move, ‘That the Question be now put,’ and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, ‘That the Question be now put,’ shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate.”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Sir Richard Webster

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words “unless it shall appear to the Chair.”—(*Mr. Whitbread.*)

Question again proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment.”

Debate resumed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) made a speech of great interest and great ability on Wednesday. The hon. Gentleman will agree with me that the exceedingly elaborate argument of that speech was an argument in favour of the closure by a fair majority without any check or control on the part of the Chair. The hon. Gentleman dwelt at some length on the promise which I gave in an early part of the debate to give a candid consideration to every proposal that might be made. I have, I think, shown such consideration, and have proved that the efforts of the Government are directed to secure the liberty of the House while we endeavoured to advance the conduct of its Business. The hon. Gentleman asked the Government to place more confidence in the House and in the manner in which the majority of the House would exercise its authority. At the same time, however, he described the present condition of the House in language which I myself will not attempt to approach, so strong, so serious, so alarming was that language. But ought the majority to have the power of enforcing the closure on any occasion? The difference between the hon. Gentleman and the Government is, that the Government seek to interpose the authority and responsibility of the Chair between the minority and the closure. I have always held that the majority should be able to close a debate; that is the guiding spirit of the Rule. But it is equally essential that this power should not be absolutely unchecked except by the fear of retribution. I have resisted Amendments which would merely increase the liberty of obstructive debate. Without the interposition of the Chair the closure might itself become an instrument of obstruction, and would enable any Member to waste 15 or 20 minutes of the time of the House simply to ascertain that there was not a

sufficient majority for the application of the Rule. I am not prepared to agree with the hon. Gentleman that there is no danger of the majority using its power in a tyrannical manner. When power is given to a body of men it is by no means safe to assume that it would always be used in a proper manner. We cannot be sure that the best traditions of the House would always prevail, and there is danger that a time would come when the possession of power would be held to justify its use. I should be betraying the trust which has been confided to me if I, a Member of the present majority, could entrust the majority permanently with the power, at any moment, of putting an end to the debates of the House. I, for my part, am not prepared to undertake such a responsibility unchecked and uncontrolled. It is right that the Moderator of this great Assembly representing its judgment and authority should decide as to what is an adequate and fitting discussion of the questions which come before it. I am justified in referring to the debates of 1882 and to the words of a prominent Member of the advanced wing of the Liberal Party—

“The Democratic creed was that there ought to be very frequent elections—say, once every three years; that certain measures ought to be submitted to the people at those elections; that there should be a *plebiscite* with regard to them; and that if the people made up their minds they should pass, the Ministry representing the majority, having received an imperative mandate to carry them through, discussion was, therefore, useless.”—(3 *Hansard*, [274] 680-1.)

Then the hon. Gentleman went on—

“Upon questions which had been threshed out in magazines and newspapers and on public platforms the country had already made up its mind, and upon them he would give Gentlemen opposite a fair half-hour to state their views.”—(3 *Hansard*, [274] 680-1.)

That was the language of the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). He objected strongly to put it in the power of a majority to close a debate on some matter of vital importance after a few hours' or a day's or even two days' discussion. A majority entrusted with unchecked power of that kind might easily be conceived as pleading that it had received a mandate from the constituencies which must be fulfilled without a moment's delay. The hon. Member for Bedford argued that if his Amendment were adopted there

would be no danger of surprise in the application of the closure. It is true that the figures in the Rule afford a safeguard against a surprise; but it must not be forgotten that there are now more than two Parties in the House, and that by ingenious combinations it would be quite possible to effect a surprise and convert a practical minority into a majority at a given moment, and then to insist on the termination of a debate. The truth must be confessed that the House is not constituted as it used to be. The traditions under which the House was governed many years ago, and which existed when I first entered Parliament, are no longer observed with equal regard. New powers and new authorities are in existence; the Rules are strained, and order and authority are defied. [*Cries of “No!” from the Irish Members.*] I am sure that hon. Members will acquit me of any desire to say anything disrespectful to them; but those whose duty it is to attend the debates of the House from the commencement of the Sitting at half-past 4 until the rising of the House at 2 o'clock will agree with me that there has been a vast change in the character both of the House and of our debates—that there is not that respect for the traditions and the authority of those whose duty it is to conduct the Business of the House which formerly existed. The Rules which exist are no longer observed in accordance with the traditions under which the House has been governed; but are abused with the view to the attainment of ends which are considered by hon. Members to be desirable at a particular time. I am not, therefore, prepared to accept the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford to put unchecked and uncontrolled power in the hands of the majority. The hon. Member says that the proposal of the Government will impose upon the Chair a burden too heavy and a responsibility too great to be borne; but the Speaker and Chairman are at the present moment charged with a duty which is shared by no one else in the House—neither by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, nor by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen sitting on these Benches, nor by any other Member. They have the duty imposed on them of declaring the evident sense of the House that the discussion has proceeded as far as it ought to be

[*Eighth Night.*]

carried, and of determining whether the Question should be put for the closure of the debate. It occurs to me that the proposal we now make is a proposal which will enormously reduce the responsibility of the Chair. I can imagine Sir, that under the existing Rules there have been occasions when, sitting in that Chair, you must have weighed seriously the condition of affairs, and that you may have doubted whether it was not your duty to have intervened when you have refrained from doing so. Under the Rule now proposed you will be relieved from that anxiety, and your duty will only arise when a Member rises in his place and moves that the closure shall be applied and that the Question shall be put. It will then be for you to determine, having fair regard to the rights of the minority whether it is your duty to permit the Question to be put. Your responsibility, under these circumstances, will be infinitely less onerous than it is under the present condition of things. An hon. Member who spoke upon this subject the other night spoke of the "rights of the minority" as a thing altogether unknown in this House, and intimated that personally he did not know what the rights of the minority were, and did not know how to interpret them. I would refer the hon. Member to an interesting speech by the hon. Member for Bedford, in 1882, who supported with great force the Rules of Procedure, on the ground that the action of the Speaker was a protection for minorities. We bring you in, Sir, as a protection for minorities. The Speaker and the Chairman are perfectly well aware what the meaning of a "minority" is in this House, and it is unnecessary to define the expression. The Speaker and the Chairman are perfectly capable of forming a judgment upon the expediency of granting or withholding consent, and I have no doubt they would form correct and honest judgments, which would compel acquiescence on both sides of the House. I cannot help remembering that one of the traditions which surround the Chair is that, on all occasions when a question of importance is before the House, the Speaker invariably gives his casting vote in favour of the further consideration of the subject. The power given to the Chair under this Rule is of a precisely analogous charac-

ter. It may be an element of delay or of procrastination, but at all events it will be exercised in favour of those who are not the majority, and consequently it will not bear a Party or factious complexion. In voting for the Amendment to insert words to the effect that the closure shall not be applied until an opportunity has been afforded for debate, the hon. Member for Bedford has unwittingly supplied me with an argument. He says that before the closure takes place an opportunity shall be given for determining whether the question has been adequately discussed; but who is to say that the opportunity has or has not been afforded unless it is the Speaker or Chairman? If it is to be the Chair, I prefer that the authority should be given in a more direct way. Now, Sir, I prefer to rely upon the judgment, the fairness, and the equity of the Chair rather than trust to the opinion of the majority without the judgment of the Chair. If I believed that I was adding in the slightest degree to the burdens imposed upon the Chair, or that I was imposing a burden which I believed the Chair would be unwilling to undertake in the interests of the country at large, I should doubt whether I ought to propose the closure at all, and certainly I should not propose a closure by a simple majority. We are asked to have a little more faith in the mother of Parliaments, and we are told almost in the same breath, of the uncertainty, confusion, and hesitation which may prevail in the House. I believe that the Speaker and the Chairman are the only persons who stand between that which may become anarchy and confusion, and the proper conduct of the Business of the House. I believe that the proposal we have made will avert the anarchy and confusion which some hon. Members predict will arise if the power of the Chair should be in any way diminished, and that it will lead to greater regularity and rapidity—seemly rapidity—in the transaction of the Business of the House. I believe that under this Rule the Chair will consider, not the interest of the Government or of a Party, but will have regard, in the discharge of his duties, to the interests of the House of Commons and of the country. He will have to consider the importance of the subject under discussion, and to frustrate any attempt at surprise, or to snatch a Divi-

sion when the views entertained upon a particular question have not been fully indicated; he will have to form a judgment as to whether fair and reasonable discussion has taken place, and it will be his duty to protect the rights and privileges of minorities in all sections of the House. It is upon these grounds that I support the Amendment I have submitted to the House, and I am unable to accept the excision of the words which the hon. Member has moved to omit; in the conviction that in giving these greater powers the House will make at least an approach to the better conduct of public affairs which so urgently demands the attention of the House.

MR. GLADSTONE (Mid Lothian): Mr. Speaker, I was in the hope a short time ago from an expression which fell from the right hon. Gentleman that the field of difference on this subject was about to be greatly narrowed by the action of the right hon. Gentleman. I will not say for a moment that he entered into an undertaking, but I certainly understood the right hon. Gentleman entertained an expectation that he would be able to adopt the substance of the Amendment of which Notice has been given by the right hon. Member for North Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth.) The right hon. Gentleman, however, has not found himself able to adopt that Amendment. I will not give an opinion at this moment upon that Amendment, further than to say that I think the substance of it very considerably narrows the field of debate and the breadth of the difference of the House. I think I can conjecture at least why it is that the right hon. Gentleman has not adopted that Amendment. I think he has felt that if he had done so he would have been open to be challenged as to why he has proposed any alteration in the Rule at all, because the Amendment of the right hon. Member for North Hants distinctly points out to the Speaker the duty of having regard to the evident sense of the House. So far it is satisfactory in this discussion that there is no reason for mixing with it any polemical or contentious element. I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman has laboured in perfect good faith for the general interests of the House, and I hope he will give the credit freely and readily, not only to the Front Opposition Bench, but to the whole House, of being actuated

by the same spirit. It is important that we should ascertain what is actually the issue before us. The right hon. Gentleman says that the issue is whether they are to have an unchecked majority exercising the power of closure. Permit me to say that that statement is not quite correct. Undoubtedly the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) has argued strongly for the use of the closure by the majority as against the use of the closure in the manner now proposed. But the right hon. Gentleman has not abolished the existing Rule, and there is an existing Rule which provides that there shall be a check on the power of the majority, which check it may be—I do not say it would—but it possibly may be the pleasure of the House to maintain, whether by adopting the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Hampshire or by keeping the present Rule as it stands. We have not come to the question yet as one for direct decision whether there is to be a form of closure at the unrestrained will of the majority, or not. We shall come to argue upon that question, but it is not now before the House, because there is in existence and not yet abrogated a restraint upon the power of closure by the majority. I think the right hon. Gentleman has slightly indulged in a flight of the imagination. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), whether in the exercise of the remarkable faculty of dry humour he possesses or otherwise, has proposed to the House that on all occasions half-an-hour and no more shall be allowed to the opponents of a Bill to state their case. The right hon. Gentleman reiterating that opinion, which was probably made in jest, thinks that it constitutes a serious danger when introduced into the present discussion. Let me put this to the right hon. Gentleman. Does he think it probable that such an opinion will spread in this House or be adopted by a large section of the House? I am bound to admit that, although I cannot follow him in the anticipations contained in his speech; he did appear to think that such a suggestion constitutes a serious danger—that the opinion may become contagious, and that there is a possibility of its being adopted by a large number of Members. Let me ask him this question, and I do so with more confidence because I have

anticipated the way in which he would meet my challenge on the first question. If a large and powerful body of Members adopt the view that half-an-hour only should be allowed to the opponents of a measure for stating their views, does the right hon. Gentleman think that any power he could place in the hands of the Speaker could enable him to meet such a formidable organization? Any proposal he now makes or has made would be utterly futile for the attainment of such an object. I do not agree with the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman as to the issue now before the House. In my opinion, the present issue is really this—can we afford to add to the burdens now laid upon the Chair with respect to closure? The right hon. Gentleman says that we are not adding to those burdens, but that the Speaker has now an entirely unshared responsibility; and as he is going to have a shared responsibility, the right hon. Gentleman appears to argue that his responsibility is going to be diminished. No doubt it would be so if the Speaker with an unshared responsibility were under a compulsion to act. But he is under no compulsion whatever to act, if his mind is not satisfied that there is occasion to do so. How is the Speaker to be called upon to act? My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) the other day in correcting an inaccurate statement, very much strengthened my case. He showed that there must be two conditions on which the Speaker must be satisfied before he can act at all. What is the state of the case? If the Speaker is called upon to act not upon his own responsibility or his own view, but upon direct challenge, possibly at a moment's notice; in the discharge of his diversified duties it might frequently occur that he may have been compelled to draw his mind from the subject of debate for the purpose of disposing by the side of the Chair of another question not immediately before the House, but necessary to be disposed of by him. Therefore, in that view the increase of the responsibility of the Speaker is very clear. His responsibility at present, no doubt, is serious, if he does act, but he is under no compulsion to act, and no one can expect him to act, and no one can find fault with him for not acting, if his mind is not clear upon the important

conditions of action. There is one point which I wish to clear out of the way. The hon. Member for Bedford in his admirable speech referred to the question as to the inherent power of the Speaker under the present Rule to exclude an obstructive Motion for the use of the closure—a Motion, that is to say, made for the purpose of wasting the time of the House. It has been thought by some—I believe it is thought by my hon. Friend—that if we can suppose a case in which the proposal of the closure is made for the purpose of wasting time, the Speaker has an inherent power to refuse to put the Motion. But, at any rate, let it be clearly understood that there is no doubt on the subject. I wish to say that I and those who agree with me have no objection, but, on the contrary, shall approve of a clear understanding being come to which shall place it beyond all doubt that the Speaker has it in his power, and that it is his duty to exclude an obstructive use of the power of closure by putting any such Motion aside. I am sure I am speaking the mind of the hon. Member for Bedford, and many others, when I say that on that subject there can be no debate or discussion between us; but if the duty is put upon the Speaker, in the exercise of his veto, of having to take into consideration the question of whether the proposal for closure is an infringement of the rights of minority, that is, in our opinion, a great increase in the burdens which now rest upon the Chair; and I think that the opinion of the hon. Member for Bedford, and others with whom I have consulted, is that the Office of Speaker would not bear that increase. I will not prophesy; but I believe that the Speakership will be additionally weighted by the burden now proposed to be put upon it, and that it cannot afford to be so weighted. I can recollect the days when the Speaker had a surplus of power beyond that which it was necessary for him to exercise; but all the power of the Speakership is now fully employed in its most arduous and difficult duties, and no additional labours ought to be placed upon it. With regard to the power of closure generally, I may say that I have never rated its advantages very high. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale attaches, I believe, far more value to it than I do. Under the circumstances it is a power

reasonable to be introduced; but I am bound to say that I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House when he supposes that the closure and the other Rules of Procedure will introduce some great and vital change in the facilities for carrying on the Business of the House. Such expectations are, I believe, altogether visionary; and I have the gravest doubt whether the Government will ever, by these Rules, even retrieve or recoup themselves for the time they are now spending in carrying them. For the purposes of comparison there are three methods of providing for the interposition of the Chair in the exercise of the power of closure. There is first the method under the Rule at present in force, and which it is doubtless the intention of the Government to repeal; but it will not give us a *tabula rasa*; and we shall still have a law in force, if we are to have the intervention of the Speaker at all. Let us see what is the form of intervention now. I say that it is the minimum of intervention, because it is hedged about by several conditions. In the first place, the Speaker must be convinced in his own mind that it is his duty to intervene, and unless he is convinced in his own mind affirmatively it is his duty not to act. He may possibly have been prevented from fully considering the question, and it is his duty not to act until he has had an opportunity of fully considering it. His safety is in non-action; in non-action he is secure, and no responsibility can be placed upon him until he has acted, and until his mind has been brought to a proper conclusion. The second condition is that he must be satisfied it is agreeable to "the evident sense of the House." There is no doubt at all, I presume, about the meaning of the words "evident sense of the House." By that phrase is meant what was called by the right hon. Member for North Hants the general sense of the House. I should say myself the overwhelming sense of the House. It does not mean that hon. Gentlemen on the one side of the House are stronger and on the other weaker. That would not be the evident sense of the House; and it was with the intent of excluding any such action that we asked the House to adopt these most important limiting words. The Speaker, under the present Rule, intervenes, if he intervenes at all,

on account of his own deliberate judgment, and as the servant of the House in giving expression to the distinct and overwhelming conclusion of the House. It is in complete conformity with the traditions of the Chair that the Speaker should interpose under the Rules of the House for the purpose of sustaining what he believes to be the general sense of the House. Therefore as far as the responsibility of the Speaker is concerned, I say that that responsibility is now at its minimum. I can hardly conceive a case where the closure in its present form would be used against any combination of Gentlemen deliberately associated together in this House in pursuit of a policy founded upon conviction. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of changes that have taken place in the House. I can speak as an eye-witness, and I may say that the main change that has taken place in straining the Rules of the House and opposing its will has no reference to any particular Party, but is due to the fact that the individual Member has not that degree of respect, that degree of veneration—I may almost say that degree of awe—for the general and manifest will of the House which in my early days, I will venture to say without fear of contradiction, used to be universal. It is therefore necessary to have Rules to deal with eccentric and refractory Members and their possible cliques; but that any Party can be put down by such Rules I do not for one moment believe. My confidence in the Rule, however, even as it at present stands has been greatly shaken by what happened on the only occasion when the closure was put in force; and when with one or two marked exceptions the Members of the Conservative Opposition withdrew from the House, and those who remained voted against the closure—among them the present Lord Chancellor, whose business it now is to maintain Order in the other House of Parliament as far as he is allowed a function of that kind. On that occasion the Conservative Party thought it necessary to act with the minority, to the distinct disparagement of the authority of the Chair. Well, Sir, I learned a good deal from that occurrence. It showed me that I could not rely upon the Rules of the House, even to the moderate extent to which they went. I am not prepared to say that I have strong confidence in

the permanent working of the existing Rule of Closure. I will not argue or press that the time has come when it is necessary to repeal it. It might remain for further trial; but, whether that be so or not, one thing I have learned from the action of the Rule is that the weight already laid on the Chair is as great a weight as the Chair can possibly sustain, and that it would be most unwise and most short-sighted to add to the burden. If it is proposed to add to that burden we may not only endanger the dignity of the Chair in the discharge of its functions, but the future efficiency of this House. Other modes of the Speaker's intervention are now brought forward which are not, I think, consistent with sound principle. In the original proposal of the Government it was provided that any Member might move the closure on obtaining the permission of the Speaker. Putting aside the case of the use of the closure for purely obstructive purposes, with which I have already dealt, it may safely be assumed that the Motion for the Closure would always come from a Member of the presumed majority. I object to this proposal, because it gives no indication as to how the Speaker should exercise his power; and because such interference on the part of the Speaker in consenting to the Motion being made would invariably be an interference on behalf of the stronger side. The tendency would, therefore, be that the Speaker would become the champion of the presumed majority, and the antagonist of the presumed minority. But the Speaker of the House cannot afford to be regarded as the champion of one Party and the antagonist of another. The exercise of such a power would tend to set him against the minority, and would likewise tend to set the minority against him. I am not supposing the smallest error on the part of the Speaker; I am supposing him to be interpreting soundly the Rules and acting firmly and resolutely upon them. But the right hon. Gentleman now proposes a different plan—namely, that the Speaker is to allow the closure to go forward unless he thinks fit, in order to avoid an infringement of the rights of the minority, to interpose his veto. The right hon. Gentleman says that he is in the majority. That is new to me. Interpreting the right hon. Gentleman strictly, I am not

aware that that is the fact, although, if he had said, "I am in a position which for practical purposes is equivalent to the majority," I should have taken no exception to the right hon. Gentleman's statement. With delightful modesty he comes forward to shut out his majority from the abuse of power. He would not place confidence even in himself and in those who sit around him not to abuse that power that a general liberty of closure in the hands of the majority would give, and all this for consideration of the interests of the minority. The minority are deeply, it may be hoped eternally, grateful for the genuine, it may even be said the supererogatory, care which is being taken of their interests. But I am bound to say that on the Opposition side of the House we have no wish for that care from the right hon. Gentleman. We have no fear of the intentions and conduct of the majority in a capital matter. We are persuaded that the majority is too just and too rational to commit so gross a crime as to put down liberty of discussion, or so gross a blunder as to attempt to check it by the undue use of the power of closure. At the same time, I would not ask for an abatement of the right hon. Gentleman's consideration for the minority, if in providing for the interests of the minority the right hon. Gentleman was not about to do very serious mischief. In the amended proposal, where the Chair is to interpose a veto, that veto will be sought upon a Motion made in the interest of the presumed majority of the House, and the Speaker is to be called upon by his veto to make himself a judge against the presumed majority of the House, and to establish himself as a check and limitation upon the exercise by that majority of its powers. Now, I would venture to ask those who sit around, in whatever quarter of the House they may be, whether this is not an absolute innovation? Is there a single Rule or tradition of the House which recognizes in a great or small degree the Speaker as a legitimate and wholesome check upon the will of the majority of the House? Of course, no one can have a check upon the will of the declared majority; but is it wise to put the Speaker into collision with the presumed majority? If we require the Speaker to do that it is very likely—almost certain—that he will be extremely cautious in

the exercise of this veto. He will exercise it, if he be a wise man—and he will be a wise man—very rarely indeed, for he will feel the dangerous character of the function which it is attempted to put upon him. I think, then, we should have, as the effect of placing the Speaker in conflict with the presumed majority, in the first place, an innovation of a rather gross character in the whole traditions of his Office; and, in the second place, as regards the practical consequences of the change, the introduction of a great wrench into the position of the Chair which will materially weaken its basis. Let it be supposed, however, that the Speaker exercises the veto pretty freely. Many Members then would feel themselves placed in a rather painful dilemma. Having strong views about the irksomeness of prolonged debate and the necessity of closure, they would be impatient of the interference of the Speaker, but they would feel the importance of maintaining the dignity of the Chair. They would be divided between conflicting sentiments, and conflicting sentiments of that kind, whichever way a private Member might ultimately decide, are not at all favourable to that position which I desire to see the Chair of this House always maintain—namely, a position not only strong, but unquestioned and unsuspected. But suppose that they so far sacrifice their desire for closure and feel themselves, as will frequently happen, under an obligation to refuse the Motion for Closure—suppose that the Speaker has interposed his veto, and that when the closure is put to the House it is rejected by the majority. That would not always happen, but what I am afraid of is that it might happen sometimes. The judgment which the Speaker has passed in these difficult matters is liable to be over-ruled by the House. Who that recollects the first occasion on which it was attempted to bring the closure about under the present Rule will not be conscious that the case which I have put is very far from being an improbable case? Suppose that it happens not only once but twice or thrice that the Speaker having interposed his veto, and having given thereby a presumable sanction to the Motion, is over-ruled, and the closure refused. Who will tell me that the position of the Speaker would be the same as it was before he began to exercise his

power? It appears to me that that lies at the root of the whole question. Even if it were a distant risk to the stability and the dignity of the Chair, I would not for any benefit that I could anticipate from this veto incur that risk. I hold the position of the Chair to be too precious to be trifled with. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford is inconsistent, because, while he justly lauded the House of Commons for all its high characteristics, he likewise said the Chair was the one barrier between their debates and anarchy. Of course it is. In every Deliberative Assembly so it must be. But there is no Deliberative Assembly in the world in which the position of its President has anything like the importance of the position of the Speaker. There is no Deliberative Assembly in the world where the Chair is so fortified by long traditions and by recollections that I may even call consecrated recollections. To incur a danger in that quarter is a thing which of all others we should avoid. Let there be a recourse, if there is a necessity to meet, to some other mode of meeting that necessity. Let us not put upon the Chair, already so burdened that it has become a commonplace to say that the calls upon the Speaker are up to the extreme limits of human capacity to meet them—let us not under such circumstances augment those burdens, for the position of the Chair is alike vital to the dignity of the House and to the efficient discharge of the Business of the nation.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has on this occasion surpassed himself in the ingenuity of his argument and the minuteness of his criticism. I hope that the House, which has listened with admiration to the masterly display of the right hon. Gentleman's dialectical skill, has understood fully what it is the right hon. Gentleman advises and what he asks the House to do. When he first began his speech, and asked what was the issue at stake, I thought that the right hon. Gentleman was going to suggest that, after all, the Amendment had better be withdrawn, and that the House should be content with the Rule which now

[*Eighth Night.*]

existe. The right hon. Gentleman gave us an eloquent vindication of the origin of the existing Rule; but towards the close of his explanation the right hon. Gentleman also gave us to understand that, admirable as the existing Rule is in its inception, from various causes it has not answered his expectations; therefore, I presume the right hon. Gentleman did not advise the House to maintain the existing Rule of Closure.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I said that I thought the existing Rule should be given a further trial, but that I had not the same confidence in it that I had.

LORD JOHN MANNERS: It appears, then, that the sum and substance of the speech we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman is that he is willing to give a Rule which he admits has not succeeded a further trial, while he has no confidence that it will succeed in the future, and that is the advice which the right hon. Gentleman practically gives the House in his speech of an hour's duration! I confess that I have never been one of those who have taken the prominent part the right hon. Gentleman has taken in advising new Rules of Closure. I admit freely, probably with nearly every Member of the House, that there should be some check upon the prolixity of our debates, and I am willing to concede with the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) that there should be some more effective method of closure. But I really was under the impression, until I heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that the only subject of debate was the question what form the closure should take, whether the action of the Chair should be brought into play, or whether it should be altogether excluded in accordance with the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). The issue before us is simply that raised by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford. We are not now discussing whether the words which follow this part of the Resolution are the best that could be devised or not. Though the right hon. Gentleman has given us an exhaustive criticism of those words, all we have now to decide is whether the Chair is to be brought into play or not. Her Majesty's Government believe that it would be for the interest of the House, and would preserve the privileges of the

minority, that there should be certain protection afforded them by the action of the Chair. The right hon. Gentleman has warned the House in the most solemn tones of the danger to which we are subjecting the Chair by the imposition of that modified responsibility upon its occupant. Sir, we do not share those fears. We hold them to be groundless; and we do not think the statement the right hon. Gentleman has made in support of those fears would justify us in accepting the Amendment. It has been urged by the right hon. Gentleman that the Chair will not bear the additional burden which the exercise of that veto would impose on it. I, on the contrary, am prepared to contend that the exercise of that veto, limited as it is by the words that follow and by the proportion of Members that must be present, would not add to the responsibility devolving upon the Chair under the present Rules. On the contrary, I maintain that the responsibility thrown on the Chair will be less than at present, and its duties less arduous and less difficult and delicate than they now are. One reason urged by the right hon. Gentleman for regarding the present Rule as valueless is that on one occasion, a year or two ago, when an endeavour was made to put the closure in force, the great body of the Opposition either walked out of the House or voted against it. My recollection of that occasion is perfectly clear, because I did not walk out of the House, nor did I vote against the exercise by the Speaker of the duty imposed upon him. The fact was that there was a certain omission in the Rule as to the mode in which the Speaker was called upon to act. Undoubtedly there was a surprise. Members did not know what was coming; and, being taken by surprise, many of them took the course which the right hon. Gentleman has described. Under the New Rule there is every reason to hope that hon. Members will not be taken by surprise, and that is one of the advantages that we believe will follow the proposed Rule. As he proceeded in his speech, the right hon. Gentleman opposite warmed to his subject, and seemed disposed to support the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford in its integrity; and, on behalf of those sitting behind him, he declared that he had no fear of the closure by the great

majority of the House alone, and did not desire check or safeguard of any kind whatever. I could not help thinking on whose behalf, and for how many Members who sit behind him, the right hon. Gentleman made that statement. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) seems, by his movements and gesticulations to imply that all the Members who sit behind the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian accept that proposal, and are prepared to vote the closure pure and simple. The right hon. Member for Derby is a very great authority, and has taken an active part in all the discussions on this subject; but even if he be right as to the Members who sit behind him, I can hardly suppose that many of the hon. Gentlemen who sit below the Gangway, instead of sitting behind the Front Opposition Bench, are enamoured of the closure without a safeguard. During this long, protracted, and desultory discussion, how many speeches had been made by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway warning hon. Members on the Conservative side of the House of what may happen to them if they once put their heads in the mouth that is about to swallow them up when they find themselves in a minority, after the closure has been voted by them? It has been asked by the Irish Members if we are foolish enough to suppose we shall always remain in a majority, and we are asked to provide a safeguard for the time when we may be a disheartened and miserable minority. I am greatly obliged to hon. Members from Ireland for their great consideration in regard to our position; but I do not think even their good will would be so eloquent or so vehement if they had not some idea that in pleading the cause of the Conservatives, they were doing their best to promote their own. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, although he assumed to speak for all Parties behind him, was not speaking from what is called a "mandate," which had been given to him, when he said that they were perfectly willing to submit to the closure without the imposition of any check or safeguard whatever. The issue now before the House has been fairly stated by the hon. Member for Bedford, and the House is in possession of all the facts of the case. It is an extremely simple and clear issue—whe-

ther we are to have the closure without any safeguard or check whatever interposed between the majority and the minority, or whether you will interpose between the Member of the House or the Minister—I care not which it is, who asks for the closure—a safeguard for the minority, and for the just conduct of debate in the veto of the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I greatly fear that the House is about to proceed to a Division on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford upon the wrong words. I had the privilege of addressing the House on the general question before we began to consider the Resolutions in detail; and I said then that it would be extremely undesirable that the Chair should have any real part in applying the closure. I cannot but think that, however it is exercised—and I am sure it would always be exercised with the strictest impartiality and the best judgment—that it would not redound to the strength and authority of the Chair. I am afraid—and I think that experience has already shown the truth—that any attempt on the part of the Chair to discriminate the occasions when the closure should be imposed, having regard to the rights of the minority—must be highly perilous to the dignity and authority of the Chair. I, therefore, regretted, when a Rule of Closure was proposed four years ago, that it was adopted in the form in which it now exists, and I should regret its being adopted in the form now before the House. I am not one of those who have absolute confidence as to what may be the action of a majority of the House. The permanent majority of the House must always be trusted; but the majority of the moment, or the majority of the night, is a power against which all our Rules are devised. Every Rule we have adopted has been adopted by the House at large, to prevent an abuse by a fleeting majority of the night. Having had experience of the action of a majority having been both in a majority and in a minority myself, I am firmly persuaded that it would be extremely dangerous to give to a fleeting majority of the House an absolute and unrestrained power of closure. I never felt that danger more strongly than when I formed one of a powerful majority—when we were sur-

rounded by persons full of power and the consciousness of power, impatient of delay, and anxious to press forward any object they had at heart. It is in such a case as that that the danger lies of giving unchecked power to the majority. Therefore, I greatly desire that some restraint should be put upon the power of the majority by a strong Rule. I would confine it strictly to persons charged with definite responsibility either with respect to general Business or the Business in hand; and next, that it should only be carried by such a majority as would secure confidence that what was done by that majority would also have been done by the permanent majority. The three dangers which my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford desires to counteract are the danger of tyranny, the danger of surprise, and the danger of disorder. If you retain the numbers as they are proposed, or if, as I greatly prefer, you adopt a proportional majority, you will have ample protection against surprise and tyranny. But you must also have some protection against disorder, and the protection which I would lay down against disorder is in not allowing any person to move the closure except he is a person holding a position of responsibility in connection with the Government, or a person in a position of responsibility in respect of the Business in hand. A proposal to that effect, I regret to say, was rejected on Wednesday when it was brought before the House by the hon. Member for Lancashire (Mr. Leake). You must, however, have some protection, or perhaps you will find some speculative Member getting up to try what the effect of moving the closure might be. What would happen if some other authority cannot intervene? The question must be put to the Vote. The hon. Member for Bedford, in answer to that, stated that the inherent power of the Chair would be sufficient to enable the Speaker or the Chairman to disallow the question being put. I was somewhat surprised to hear an old Whig talk of the inherent power of the Chair; and certainly, so far as I am concerned, although I have no wish to limit the power of the Chair, I have no desire to enlarge the inherent power of the Chair; and I prefer to be governed by the clear and definite provisions of a statute. As to the inherent right of the Chair, it

is a phrase of the measure of which I venture to say we are not always assured, and I doubt whether the Chair has the inherent right now claimed for it. Reference has been made to a Motion adopted four or five years ago, which provided that, if the occupant of the Chair was of opinion that an abuse of the Rules of the House was being committed, he might object to put the Question. But that is not the rule. The occupant of the Chair has a certain power; but what is it? Not to put the Motion aside, or to say that the Question shall not be put; but to declare the Question shall be put forthwith. If the occupant of the Chair has an inherent right of disposing of the matter, if he thinks there has been an abuse of the Forms of the House; what is the meaning of that Rule? If the Chair possesses the greater power contended for, this smaller power would be involved in it. What might be the action of some speculative Member? He comes here late at night, and he finds himself prevented from going away by some stalwart gentleman stationed an outer door. He is not always animated by too much political enthusiasm, and, if desirous of getting away, he would say—"I beg to move that the Question be now put." In such a case as that what power does the Speaker possess? He is bound to put the Question. By that means you may have a closure and a clear abuse of the Forms of the House, and it is necessary that there should be some check against such an abuse. How, then, is this danger to be checked? I think it would be met by the words, "unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Forms of the House." But the hon. Member is moving to omit those words, and, therefore, I am afraid that he is taking the Division upon a wrong issue. Now, I venture to submit that it is absolutely essential to put in those words, "Unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Forms of the House." If the hon. Member for Bedford will withdraw his present Amendment, and then propose to omit the words which follow, there will be a fair issue. But it will be entirely misleading to divide on the Amendment which is now before the House.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford): After the appeal of the hon. Member for

Bodmin (Mr. Courtney), perhaps I may be allowed, by the indulgence of the House, to say that I took my stand upon the words on the Paper at the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who thought that the most convenient form of bringing to an issue whether this duty should be cast upon the Chair. I stated, in the course of the remarks I made, that I had no objection whatever to the words relating to the abuse of the Forms of the House, and I should not object to the Amendment which stands on the Paper in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage)—

“Unless when a Member rises to make such Motion the consent of the Chair be refused, on the ground that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House.”

Therefore, if the Division is taken on the words I propose to omit, I shall have to ask the House subsequently to take another Division on the words relating to the rights of the minority. I think it would be more convenient if the House would allow me to withdraw the Amendment I have already moved, and give me permission to move the omission of the words, “Or an infringement of the rights of the minority.”

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman wish to withdraw the Amendment?

MR. WHITBREAD: I should like to ask the leave of the House to withdraw the Amendment I have moved, and in its place to move the omission of the words, “Or an infringement of the rights of the minority.”

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Amendment be withdrawn?

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Some of my hon. Friends have placed Amendments upon the Paper to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford, and I think some arrangement ought to be made for taking the sense of the House upon those Amendments now standing in our names. Certainly the rights of Members who have Amendments to the Amendment which it is now proposed to withdraw, ought not to suffer.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Division): On the question of the withdrawal of the Amendment, I wish to say that the Leader of the

House is entirely responsible for the confusion into which we have been thrown. It is most unfortunate that the right hon. Gentleman did not put his Amendment down on the paper until the time had gone by for proposing Amendments to it in their proper order. As to the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford to withdraw his Amendment, I think it places the House in a position of some difficulty. I and my hon. Friends object not only to the words relating to the infringement of the rights of the minority, but also to the words relating to an abuse of the Rules of the House. We believe that those words are too vague, and that they leave too large a discretion to the Chair. We believe that in certain cases the minority should have a right of proposing the *clôture* as well as the majority. If hon. Members will turn to page 14 of the Amendments it will be found that there are two or three Amendments standing in the names of hon. Members for Ireland, and especially one in the name of the hon. Member for Donegal (Mr. O'Hea), who proposes to leave out from the Amendment the words “it shall appear to the Chair,” in order to substitute an Amendment to the effect

“that a Member rising in his place may claim to move that the Question be now put unless 40 Members rise in their place to signify that such Motion is an abuse of the Forms of the House.”

That may be a right or wrong proposal, but it is certainly a proposal which we have the right to discuss. The only thing I desire to place before the House is the necessity of safeguarding the rights of hon. Members to propose the Amendments now standing on the Paper in reference to the words which are proposed to be left out.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford is withdrawn, it would be necessary to take Amendments which stand on the Paper before the words which he now proposes to leave out are reached. The words now proposed to be left out are “unless it shall appear to the Chair,” and the next words of the Amendment of the Leader of the House are that “such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House.” Any Amendment relating to those words will have precedence over the Amendment the hon. Member now proposes to move, and which is to omit

[*Eighth Night.*]

the words "or an infringement of the rights of the minority." Is it the pleasure of the House that the Amendment be withdrawn? [*Cries of "No!"*]

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I hope that course will not be taken. It is desirable that we should come to an issue at once, and in my opinion it might be come to at once. I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway attach much importance to the omission of the words "abuse of the Rules of the House." As far as I am concerned, I have no objection to those words at all, and I support the Resolution as far as it goes in that respect. I am quite prepared to take issue on the words "infringement of the rights of the minority," which my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford proposes to omit. Hon. Members below the Gangway will not be debarred from raising a discussion upon the words "abuse of the Rules of the House" if they desire to do so. But as everybody is prepared to come to a decision upon the main issue, I think it might be disposed of at once.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I do not know whether I am in Order in rising again, but I hope the House will extend its indulgence to me. I believe it is the general wish of the House to come to a decision as to the question whether the Chair shall interpose in favour of the rights of minorities. I think that is the general sense of the House, and I trust that hon. Members below the Gangway will permit that issue to be taken now. It is true that there are Amendments which precede that Question; but hon. Gentlemen must be aware that they are of a character which are certain to be met by a negative by the large majority of the House, seeing that they are not supported by the Opposition generally.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I think the right hon. Gentleman has taken an extraordinary course, and one which will place hon. Members sitting in this part of the House in an unfair position. I see there are on the Paper a considerable number of Amendments to these words—"abuse of the Rules of the House," and we were led to believe that the whole strength of the Liberal Party

would be applied to the erasure altogether of those words from the Rule. Under that supposition we were prepared to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford. We had no choice but to support that Amendment, because it came before the Amendment which relates to the subsequent words. But now a course is proposed to be pursued which is supported by right hon. Gentlemen opposite from one motive only. The hon. Member for Bedford, acting fairly and generously towards hon. Members below the Gangway, desired to withdraw his Amendment in order to give an opportunity to discuss the words "abuse of the Rules of the House." But hon. Members opposite refuse to allow it to be withdrawn, although the hon. Member for Bedford says that he is not desirous of challenging an issue upon it. A persistence in the course now taken will only have the effect of depriving Members below the Gangway of their right to move Amendments. I beg to submit to the House, that as this Rule is manifestly for the purpose of curtailing the rights of the House, it is not fair to the Members of a Party, who are often in a minority here, to refuse to allow them the opportunity of proposing Amendments on the mere intimation that the Government intend to meet those Amendments with a negative. It is a matter in which we are all keenly interested, and we ought to have a fair chance of putting our Amendments before the House and of challenging a decision upon them. If this course is persisted in we shall not get a chance of voting as we expected to be able to vote, because it would appear now that the Liberal Party above the Gangway are not going to support us. I think we ought to have a chance of voting for the omission of these words, even if we do not get an opportunity of proposing the whole of our Amendments. The altered change of front in regard to the Amendment is, I think, of the most vital importance to us as a small Party in the House. I am somewhat astonished that the Conservative Party cannot recall the time when these Rules of Closure might have been disastrously applied to them; and I cannot understand why they should not wish to guard against this danger hereafter by supporting the Motion to omit the words "abuse of the Rules of the House." I protest in the

strongest terms against the course it is proposed to take, and I maintain that it is most ungenerous not to afford us an opportunity of laying our Amendments before the House.

MR. W. H. SMITH : I am sorry the hon. Gentleman thinks the course we are now pursuing is ungenerous. We are most anxious to give full opportunity for discussing any substantive Amendment which the House may seriously entertain. I should have been glad if I could respond to the appeal which has been made by the hon. Gentleman. I think it would be of advantage if the Amendment were withdrawn, and we were to proceed at once to the consideration of the words which the hon. Member for Bedford proposes to omit. However, under all the circumstances of the case, I do not think I should be justified in protracting the discussion, and, therefore, I will ask the hon. Gentleman to consent to allow his Amendment to be negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : Then the Question I have to propose to the House is, "that these words stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR : I understand that the House has refused to allow the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford to be withdrawn, and, under the circumstances, there is nothing left but to continue the general discussion on the Amendment. I feel bound to protest strongly against the inconvenience of a course which has been adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, because he is compelling us to continue the discussion, with a foregone knowledge that we are unable to arrive at anything like a rational result. There is, however, nothing left for me but to follow the invitation of the right hon. Gentleman, and to discuss the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford exactly as if the conversation which has just taken place had not occurred at all. I strongly object to the manner in which the noble Lord (Lord John Manners) and the Leader of the House have put the question before the House—namely, whether there should be closure, absolute and simple, or closure protected by the intervention of the Chair. I am in favour of the removal and abstention of the Chair from all partizan feeling and partizan action in this House. That is really the

solitary issue at stake—whether we shall leave the Chair in a position of perfect impartiality, or whether we shall drag the Speaker down into the arena of Party conflict. The question is, whether we are to have the intervention of the Speaker in the question of the closure? The Leader of the House maintains that there would be greater temptation to introduce the closure if it were not for the intervention of the Speaker; but that I entirely deny, and I say that there is more chance of his intervention under the present Rule. If that were so, in future the responsibility would rest with the Minister alone. I regret that the Leader of the House has not, in introducing these Rules of Procedure, paid more respect to the authority of the Chair, which he has done all in his power to break down. The right hon. Gentleman says that he wants to preserve the rights of minorities, but the only minority whose rights he wishes to preserve is the Tory minority; in fact, he wants to use the Rule for the protection of the Tory minority, and in order to put down the Irish minority in this House in their attempt to prevent the enslavement of the Irish people. For these reasons, I enter my most solemn protest against the action of the Government in this matter.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) : I wish to pay my humble tribute to the able and lucid manner in which the hon. Member for Bedford has placed this question before the House. The arguments of the hon. Member appear to me to have been in no way disposed of by the First Lord of the Treasury in his speech of this evening. I am of opinion that the vital importance of this matter can hardly be exaggerated. The danger of the intervention of the Speaker in the manner suggested by the Government, was apparent during the debates of 1882 to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, when the present Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) said that the object of the New Rule was clearly to give Ministers their own way; and he asked how, in such circumstances, could the Speaker "fail to be a partizan?" Again, in 1885 there was a Division on the clôtüre, to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has adverted, but which, I venture to think, will bear further examination. The action of the Conser-

vative Party was very significant on that occasion, and looking at the numbers on the Division, I put it to the House to consider what serious consequences might have ensued had there been eight votes less in favour of the Motion. I was very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby admit the other night that the intervention of the Chair, even in the limited manner it is exercised under the present Rule, had proved full of danger. It seems to me that the proposal of the Government to introduce the Chair in the manner it does constitutes a flagrant violation of the traditions of this House. I should not have used language which I am aware is strong, had I not the high authority of the late Sir Erskine May, who says—

“That ultimate authority on all points is the House itself, but the Speaker is the Executive officer by whom the Rules are generally enforced.”

It is much to be regretted that the Committee presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale did not take evidence. But I will refer to the Committee of 1878, before which evidence was taken, and I venture to say that hon. Members will find therein valuable information bearing upon this question. In reply to questions, Mr. Brand, the then Speaker of the House, declared his willingness to undertake any responsibility which the House thought proper to cast upon him; but he added—“I think this is a discretion which ought not to be vested in the Speaker.” He also, in reply to Mr. Newdegate, admitted that the peculiarity of the English Parliament is that “the authority in both Houses exists in the House, and not in the Speaker of either House.” That, Sir, I venture to think, entirely sustains the opinion I have expressed with regard to the proposal before us. It has been pointed out that the Chair must come in as against the minority. I notice, on referring to the debates in this House, that on the 26th February, 1884, the hon. Member for Bedford, when the House was proceeding to the election of Speaker, and upon whom fell the duty of proposing that you, Sir, should occupy that Chair, used these words—

“In the Speaker, the minority, however small, should find their friend and best protector in the just exercise of their rights.”—(*3 Hansard*, [285] 20.)

Mr. J. E. Ellis

And they were responded to by you in your speech to the House. The Rule which the Government propose to ask the House to adopt, therefore, violates the position indicated by you on that occasion. Again, I would point out that this House has always maintained the greatest jealousy with respect to partizanship on the part of its highest Officer; and, as an instance of this, I may refer to the fact that in the year 1835 the House, on the 19th February, took the very strongest step which it could take, by proceeding to elect a Speaker in the place of Sir O. M. Sutton, who had occupied the Chair of this House for 18 years, to the general satisfaction; because it was thought he had not displayed the complete indifference to Party interests which was required of the Speaker of the House. It is a fact that should give rise to reflection that the leading supporters of the Ministerial Rule are, with one or two exceptions, men of much less Parliamentary experience than those who are now opposed to it; the result of which is that a certain confusion of purpose and vacillation of mind is observable in the action of the Government. The Government, in short, are, as has been pointed out in the course of these debates, not dealing with causes, but with symptoms. I listened with great pleasure to the language which fell a week ago from the right hon. Member for Oxford University, who occupies such a high position in the House, that it was not to Rules we must look, but to the spirit prevailing among Members for the efficiency of this Assembly. It is because I believe this proposal constitutes a fatal innovation in the constitutional position of the Chair, and that its effect, if carried, will be most disastrous, that I cordially support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): Sir, it has been, up to a recent date, objected by the Party to which I belong that the principle involved in this Rule was not in accordance with the traditions of the House, which relied on the good feeling of the Members rather than upon binding down debate by any strict Rule. Time, however, has educated us. The Business of this House has largely increased. Members, at the same time, have been more and more eager to show their constituents that they were anxious to expedite measures in

accordance with the views of those who returned them to the cry of "more legislation." With the increase of Business there has been increased difficulty in transacting it; there has been an increased demand upon the time and temper of the House, on the Leaders, and on the Chair, the result of this being that the House of Commons has grown in disfavour, and there has been a feeling in the country that it is not an efficient machine for legislation and the remedying of evils which are felt to exist. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that it is necessary to reconsider our Rules, and give up some old ideas which were once fondly cherished. I think that the Government in leaving it open to any Member of the House to propose the closure, subject only to the decision of the Chair, have effected a very great improvement on the original plan. Let me point out, with regard to what has been said with regard to the position of Mr. Speaker, that his responsibility would not be increased by this Rule, and that, on the contrary, it relieves him from the duty of initiating the closure. He will only have to see that no injustice is done in regard to these three points—tyranny, obstruction, and surprise. We are told that we are to trust the House, and I think Her Majesty's Government have shown by their action that they propose to do so, and that they are not asking a guarantee from the House against itself, but against individuals who might abuse the powers of this Rule. At the same time, we desire that the trust reposed in the House should be tempered with prudence, and we feel that if the Rule were passed in the amended form suggested by the hon. Member for Bedford, it would leave the House in the hands of Members who might move the closure for obstructive purposes. For these reasons, I cordially support the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, which we do not regard as one which will work great wonders, but as one which will facilitate the Business of the House, and meet with the approval of the country.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): Sir, I regret that the hon. Member for Bedford was not allowed to take the course he proposed with regard to his Amendment. For my part, I am always in favour of the initiation of the closure

by the House. I believe that the Member who moved the closure should be responsible for it, and it is for that reason I have put down the words standing in my name upon the Paper. I cannot, however, vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend, because the words which he wishes to omit are connected with my own Amendment. I entirely agree with regard to there being a strong objection to the words "infringement of the rights of the minority," which are entirely novel, not having been used in the Rules of the House hitherto, and if my hon. Friend moves their omission, I shall vote with him.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House complains that we are occupying too much time in the discussion of these Rules; but I wish to call attention to the fact that in 1882 the Conservative Party occupied the time of the House for 19 days in discussing the first Rule. I shall not follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman on that occasion, but I shall follow it to the extent of making another protest against the position which the Government have taken up with regard to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), which has met with so much favour, and which, I venture to say, is justifiable in its character. I object to the intervention of the Chair, because it is dragging the Speaker down to the level of the excitement which takes place in debates of this House. I do not support the Amendment of the hon. Member on Party grounds; I support it because I think its tendency is to maintain the dignity of the Chair, and the respect for it which is traditional in this House.

MR. THOMAS GILL (Louth, S.): Sir, the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis), a short time since, very clearly and forcibly put the constitutional idea of the Speaker in this House, and he pointed out the difference as between the position of the Speaker of this House and that of the Speaker of almost every other Legislative Assembly in the world. The Speaker of this House occupies a unique position, and the Clause of this Rule which provides for his intervention seems to me to strike at the very foundation of his position. The hon. Member for Bedford asked, if the closure worked so well in other Assemblies, why

[*Eighth Night.*]

it should not work well in this Assembly, which is the mother of them all? Now, Sir, I think it is taking for granted a fact which is not proved to say that the closure has worked well in other Assemblies, and the House of Commons ought to ask itself the question whether that is the case. In America, the work of making laws is carried on by Standing Committees, and the *clôture*, or, as it is there called, "Moving the Previous Question," has been, it is said, the greatest engine in passing them through the House without due deliberation. An eminent authority on this point says—

"The reference of Business to Committees saves time, but it also tends to prevent discussion. The Federal House of Representatives has in course of time become the slave of its Committees, who, except in the case of revenue measures, prepare a verdict which the House is compelled to accept without debate by the use of the Motion for the Previous Question."

That, Sir, is an instance of the effect of the use of the *clôture* in the House of Representatives in America, and its result has been to impair in the most destructive manner the functions of debate in that Assembly. What is the consequence, however, of this rapid manufacture of legislation? It is that the legislation is mostly hasty, often corrupt, and that there is far too much of it, and that the President has come to exercise his veto to an extent which places the Parliament in quite a secondary position. In 1885, President Cleveland exercised his right of veto upon an enormous number of Statutes made by the Legislature. With regard to the position of the Speaker in the American Assembly, it is totally different from that of the Speaker here, for while the latter is, correctly speaking, the mouthpiece of the House; the former has gradually got into a position in which he almost wields the powers of an Executive officer of the Government. It is because the Rule of the Leader of the House strikes at the foundation of the Speaker's position in this House, that I shall give my hearty support to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford.

MR. HANDEL-COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Sir, I think the House has great reason to find fault with the way in which the Government has acted with regard to this Amendment. I am of opinion that if we are to have the closure at all, the House should take the whole responsibility with regard to it upon

itself; and I trust that the intervention of the Chair, and the bringing of the Speaker into collision with Parties in this House, will, in some way or other be prevented, because I feel that otherwise it will lead to very serious consequences. My faith, however, is in the devolution of Business, and not in Rules of Closure. I have a great desire that the object at which the Government aims should be accomplished, although I do not agree with the mode in which they are endeavouring to attain their object. I think we are spending a great deal of time on the Rules of Procedure, when we ought rather to be inviting the attention of the House to those great measures which I hope the Government are going to bring forward for the purpose of removing the difficulties under which the country is suffering. We have not gone very far yet with the first Rule, and, if I may judge from the number of Amendments on the Paper, it will be a long time before we get to the Business of the House. I cannot help thinking that the Government have incurred great responsibility in bringing forward these Rules, which, after all, are only means to an end. My object being to get to the end, which is to remove the evils from which the country is suffering, I shall heartily support the Amendment which the hon. Member for Bedford has proposed in a speech so weighty, and supported by arguments so wise.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I have an Amendment on the Paper to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, to leave out line 3 from the word "unless." I should not have spoken on the subject had it not been for the fact that the word "unless"—

MR. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. Gentleman to say he wishes to move an Amendment? He would not be in Order in doing that.

MR. O'DOHERTY: No; I am not moving an Amendment, Sir, but was about to point out to the House how it is rendered impossible for me to move the Amendment I had intended to move. What I object to in the proposal, as it stands, is this—we have already decided that any man may move the *clôture* at

any time, and we have taken away all safeguards as to amount of debate, or as to any debate being necessary, before the *clôture* can be applied; and it is now proposed that before liberty of debate in the House shall be killed there shall be a judicial decision by yourself, Sir, upon such argument as will fairly enable you to say whether or not the Motion for closing the debate is obstructive. It appears to me, and to those with whom I am acting, that by adopting that proposal you and the House will have breathing space. All the Amendments which have been decided have been Amendments dealing with what shall take place before a Member shall rise in his place; and we think that the House should now consider whether, between the Motion being made and the proposition being put from the Chair, such discussion should not be allowed as would take place before a Judge. If it is allowed, it would make the intervention of the Chair real, and not illusory. As I read the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, it is that you, Sir, must close the debate, or put the Motion, "That the Question be now put," unless the putting of that Motion would, in your opinion, be an abuse of the Rules of the House. That is to say, the presumption is in favour of the *clôture* instead of being in favour of the continuance of debate, which is a thing that will have very far-reaching results. If the presumption were still to continue in favour of the freedom of debate, and the onus were put on the Member moving the *clôture* to show that reasonable discussion had been exhausted, the time which would be occupied in discussing the desirability of enforcing the closure would not be by any means wasted. The House must bear in mind that the temptation to the Government to assent to a Motion for the closure of a debate may be very great; and yet when such a Motion is made many Members may be of opinion that such and such a person, who has a special knowledge of the subject before the House, should be heard. Such an intervention as is proposed, therefore, at such a time, would be of infinite service, and the more so because we have already decided that there shall be no stated time for the duration of a debate, and no proviso that a certain number of Members shall speak

before the *clôture* is enforced. I object to the sudden springing upon the House of a Motion for closure to be decided by the amount of attention and the amount of care from which Mr. Speaker has followed the debate. There may be many occasions when his attention is diverted with the matter in debate, and when all he has to guide him are those impatient noises which we sometimes hear at a certain time of night. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) pointed out, the intervention of the Chair proposed by the Government will be illusory. It will be invidious to require Mr. Speaker to pronounce solemnly whether or not a Motion for *clôture* is an abuse of the Rules of the House. In the case of a new Member who might not be very familiar with the Rules of the House, Mr. Speaker would be slow to put upon him the stigma that he was abusing the Rules of the House at a moment's notice, whereas, if the intervention of the Chair is a real, solid, judicial act, after deliberate discussion, then I can understand its intervention whoever makes the Motion. If the intervention is to be illusory, and if freedom of debate is to be killed without a judicial decision, undoubtedly we shall oppose the proposal to allow the Chair to intervene at all.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think I am entitled to comment on the inconvenient method in which, owing to the action of the First Lord of the Treasury, this Motion has come before the House. It comes as an Amendment to an Amendment proposed by the First Lord of the Treasury. I should have imagined it would have been a more convenient course for the right hon. Gentleman to have embodied his opinion of what the Rule should be in the Resolution originally proposed; for then it would not only have been competent for the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) to move his Amendment, but it would have been competent for hon. Members to have moved Amendments to that Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman has reduced what is really a substantive proposal to the condition of an Amendment, and confined the discussion before the House strictly to the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford, having made that the question by which we must stand or fall. The position which the Government have

[*Eighth Night.*]

already taken up in regard to these Rules is one of a very peculiar character; especially when it is viewed in the light of the proposition which they now make that the final arbitrament of this question of the clôture is nominally to remain with the Chair. They have already refused to introduce into the Rule any words by which it will be irregular for an hon. Member to make a Motion for the application of the clôture until, at least, an opportunity for discussion has been given; and they have now rendered it possible for any Member of the House, be he a Member of the Government or not, to propose that a question as to which not one word has been spoken in debate should be immediately brought to an issue. They have also refused to take on themselves the direct responsibility of proposing any such Motion. Now, Sir, I would at least submit to the House that where the benefit will undoubtedly be there also should the responsibility rest, and that it would be at least fair to the Chair that a Motion of this character should be made by one of the most responsible Members of this House. The unpleasant duty of exercising a veto in regard to a Motion moved by, it might be, one of the least experienced and most insignificant Members in the House, should not be cast upon the Chair. Her Majesty's Government are supposed to be in command of a majority of the Members of the House, and I think I am entitled to assume that no proposition to apply the clôture could be successfully carried in the House without their consent and approbation, and without their deriving most benefit from it; yet they seek to divide the responsibility for the making of such Motion, and, it may be, for the putting of a Question without discussion at all—for the House will be able to insist upon that course if this Rule is carried—between whoever makes the Motion and the occupant of the Chair. In what position will that put the Chair? I do not believe the Chair has any inherent power. It is the servant of the House, and is bound to carry out the opinions of the House. Up to the present it has had ample power to do so. If, acting on its own judgment, it believed that further discussion was unnecessary, or was a waste of time, it had power to close discussion—a power which it has exercised on undivided responsibility, and which,

so far as my experience goes, it has exercised in a most impartial and just manner. But that power will no longer remain with the Chair. It will for the future be placed in a position in which it can exercise a negative power—a restricted power. That negative power it may be called on to exercise in three different cases; in the first place, where discussion is undoubtedly proper, and, in the second place, where it is unquestionably improper; and there is a third zone, in which it may be difficult to ascertain whether discussion is proper or improper—in which the question will be a matter of opinion, and the House will be divided. Up to the present it has been the rule to permit the utmost freedom of discussion; but it is now proposed to limit that freedom, and the proposal is not that the Chair should place such limit on discussion as it might think necessary; but that the Chair should be compelled to permit the clôture to be put to the House, unless it is manifestly evident that the putting of the Motion would be an abuse of the Rules of the House. The presumption will now be entirely against freedom of discussion, and in that neutral zone, where it may be difficult to clearly gather the opinion of the House whether discussion should be permitted or not, the Chair will be absolutely powerless. But a more extraordinary position for the Chair to be placed in will be found in the proposition that the Chair to exercise its right of veto should be of opinion that the putting of the Clôture Question might be an infringement of the rights of minorities. As the Rule at present stands it will be competent for any Member of this House to rise in his place and claim to move that the Question be now put, though there may not have been one word of debate on the Question before the House. Such a Member may, unblushingly, require the Chair to form an opinion, either negative or positive, whether this Motion is an infringement of the rights of the minority or is not. Now, I do not think it would be possible for the Chair to form such an opinion unless there had been previous discussion in the House, and we are, then, reduced to the absurd position that the Chair will be asked to make up its mind on a question on which it cannot have an opinion from what has passed in the House; and not having

been able to form an opinion, the hon. Member will be entitled to have the question of the clôture put to the House. I take it that this will be a direct incentive to hon. Members to stand up before a Question which has been put from the Chair, has been discussed; and, having thus deprived the Chair of the means of knowing whether the putting of the clôture will be an abuse of the Rules of the House and an infringement of the rights of the minority, ask the Chair to allow the question of the clôture to be put. The Chair will not then be in a position to exercise its veto so that, by means of this Rule, it will be possible to escape the decision of the Chair by moving that the Question shall be put before any discussion whatsoever has taken place on it. These Rules have been debated for a very considerable period, and we have not made very much progress; but I would draw the attention of the House, through you, Sir, to the fact that in 1882 the first Rule, relating to clôture, occupied the attention of the House for 19 nights. At that time it was proposed that the Rule should be a permanent Rule; but, so far as I know, the Government have not yet given us any intimation as to whether it is their intention to make the proposed Rule a Standing Rule, or merely a Sessional Order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is now departing from the Question immediately before us, which is the intervention of the Chair.

MR. CHANCE: I was led into the mistake quite innocently, Sir. This is a matter which will introduce a radical change in the position of the Chair towards the House; but I do not intend to follow the line of argument which suggested itself to my mind by discussing the question whether such a radical change should be made in the position of the Chair by a Rule that might be merely a Sessional Order. I do not think that the radical change that will be brought about is the only fault that is to be found with the proposal. I am strongly of opinion that this proposition as to clôture is unnecessary and vicious; and, in supporting the Amendment, I do so, not on the ground that it has any inherent merit in it, but on the ground that, in voting for it, I shall be placing on record my protest against the Rule from first to last.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): The question is whether the consent of the Chair should be necessary in order that the clôture should be applied. This Rule seems to me to sin against all the traditions of this House. Under our old traditions and our Old Laws and Rules of Debate, the thing most insisted on, and which most struck the observer, was that freedom of discussion and debate were granted, not only to minorities, but to every Member of the House, whether he was in a minority of one or in a minority of one less than the majority. Individual Members were supposed to have freedom of debate, and it was supposed that that freedom would be exercised until adequate discussion was had, no matter what question was before the House. It is now confessed that there is no intention whatever to interfere with adequate discussion and freedom of debate at the same time that the Government put forward an Amendment which practically and literally takes away both. If it is possible to close a debate before a question has been considered at all, then there is an end altogether, not only to adequate discussion, but to entire freedom of debate in this House. There will be nothing to prevent a person knowing least about the Rules of the House, and least about the Question put from the Chair, standing up and proposing, "That the Question be now put." The Question will then have to be put, unless you, Sir, think it would be an abuse of the Rules of the House and an infringement of the rights of the minority, and that you would have no means whatever of knowing. You will be, logically, precluded from forming an opinion on the subject, so that this little shred of seeming freedom is preserved merely for the sake of destroying all the rest. The position will be almost as ridiculous as that forcibly described by a gentleman famous for making bulls, when he said that certain persons were "ready to give up the whole of the Constitution in order to preserve the remainder." Here a microscopic piece of liberty is preserved in order to put it into the hands of irresponsible—though, possibly, inspired—Members to choke off discussion and annihilate freedom of debate in this House. It is said that that cannot happen because the Chair may say that the Motion to apply the

clôture may be an abuse of the Rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority. But how can it be an abuse of the Rules of the House when the Rule expressly gives a Member authority to make the Motion? But from a logical point of view, before you can say it is an infringement of the rights of a minority, you must know the result of the Division, because only in that way can you tell which is the minority. The only test that by the Rules, Practice or Constitution of the House, or even by the exercise of the sharpest faculties you can apply to discover the minority on a particular question, is the test of the Division Lobby. It may be said you will have to form an opinion as to which is the majority and which the minority by the demonstrations of feeling which take place in the House. But the minority are sometimes the loudest and most obstreperous. They sometimes assume the function of the majority, and endeavour to crow down their opponents by inarticulate noises. So that it is not those who make the most noise whom you can assume to be the majority. The majority are very often very patient and long-enduring, and do not make a noise; then are you to assume that the party which does not make a noise and does not indulge in inarticulate sounds and interruptions are the majority? There again you have a source of error, and considerable error indeed. The minority may be quite as quiet as the biggest majority; so that you cannot judge by any sounds that issue from either side of the House, or even by the speeches that are made. The length of speeches is no test—you cannot say whether it is the Members of the minority or the Members of the majority who make them. What is to guide you in the matter? Why you have no guide. You are to act by some unforeseen discretion, and say that some unnumbered and unknown party is the majority or the minority. This test for entirely suppressing liberty of speech in this House, therefore, is a test which it is impossible to apply. The discretionary power which will be vested in you, Sir, it will be impossible for you to exercise in such a way as would satisfy any Member of this House. I doubt, Sir, whether even your unerring judgment would be right in the matter. However wise a Speaker may be, how is he to

decide whether the rights of a minority are being infringed? What are the rights of a minority? That is another question in regard to which we are left without guidance. I object to the Government launching us on this wild career of speculation with Rules to guide us or to guide the Chair. This is a Rule which, while professing to protect the rights of a minority, practically takes away the rights of individuals, and really does not secure to the majority the right of discussion. Even if we have ascertained what the minority is, any Member below the Gangway in opposition to the Government or in opposition to the Opposition, may stand up and make a Motion of this sort, and may choke off a debate on an inconvenient subject. The majority may wish to debate the subject, having strong opinions with regard to it, but a Member of a minority may suppress debate by bringing about a Division, which the Speaker may allow rather than expose himself to odium in the opinion of the friends of the Member moving the clôture. The Speaker may be exposed to odium by the action of individuals representing small minorities and having very little scruple in advocating their views, and in this way his position may become, not only invidious, but intolerable. I maintain, Sir, that we shall keep you in the position you occupy—the position, namely, of being able to interpose with authority and dignity to decide disputes that may arise between hon. Members with regard to the interpretation of the Rules of the House. That is a position we think would be most agreeable to the Speaker, and certainly most conformable to the Rules of this House. You, Sir, are not the master of this House, and if you interpose in these matters you will be exposed to the imputation of trying to make yourself the master of the House. The passing of the Rule in the form in which the Government now present it to us will be, Sir, to make you the servant of the majority, which, I think, would be even a worse position for you to hold than master of the House, because this House would always have strength to get rid of an inconvenient master, whereas if the Speaker became merely a tool in the hands of an intolerant his position would be a vast deal worse and more unpleasant for him, and more dangerous

to the freedom of discussion and the liberty of the House. We ought to save you, Sir, from the danger of appearing in the actual arena of Party politics.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid) : I think the fact of this Amendment having been moved by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford is a reason why it should receive particular attention at the hands of the House. Every one recognizes the great authority of the hon. Gentleman on all questions connected with the procedure in this House, and unless there can be very clear proof given that it is impracticable, I think the Government ought to have very little difficulty in accepting his Amendment. For my own part I do not hope for much from the wisdom of the Government either on matters of Procedure or any other matters. Their conduct, so far, on this first Rule has been characterized by deplorable shilly-shallying. They came down to the House with one set of Rules, and those Rules were no sooner before the House than they instructed or "inspired" one of their minor followers to set down an Amendment incorrect in its drafting. Another Member took that Amendment in hand, and he—probably with the assistance of some of his companions and colleagues—proceeded to recast the Amendment. That led to a scene of confusion and irregularity such as is very seldom witnessed in the House. That scene was altogether owing to the action of those responsible for the conduct of Business in this House. Then, having found time to consider what they should do, they came down and proposed to amend their original Resolution by the extraordinary Amendment put on the Paper by the Leader of the House. I will not go into the reasons why that Amendment has been brought forward. No doubt in the first instance it was brought forward to forestall the Amendment of which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford had given Notice—to make it inconvenient, if not impossible, for him to go on with that Amendment, which would have raised a direct issue as to whether the Chair should or should not have any intervention. Owing to this flank movement on the part of the Government, we cannot take the direct issue we might otherwise have taken. We know that if the Amendment of the hon Member for Bedford is accepted the Amendment of

the Leader of the House will fall to pieces, and will practically have to be abandoned. Sir, from time to time during the progress of this discussion we have referred to the position of the Speaker, and to the impropriety of throwing upon him any burden which would enable a member of the present or any future Government who desired to have the *clôture* applied to shelter himself from blame behind the Speaker's authority. Now, Sir, we can see plainly that the proposal of the Government is simply intended to shift from the shoulders of those responsible for the conduct of Business in this House any blame or obloquy that might arise from any unfair setting in motion of the *clôture*. The Government know very well that if they seek at any time to bring forward in an unfair manner the question of the closure of debate, that if the whole responsibility for the action is thrown on themselves, and they cannot cite the authority of the Chair, the judgment of the country and of all right-minded men will go against them in the matter. But they are perfectly aware that if they can cite the high authority of the Speaker and can say that he was the person who authorized the *clôture* to be put in force, that more than anything else will have the effect of so influencing the case, that, though the judgment of the country may not be given in their favour it, at any rate, will not be pronounced against them. This Amendment of the Leader of the House is in itself somewhat un-Constitutional, because it suggests that the Speaker should have in his mind the rights of the minority, and it puts into writing that the Speaker should have in his mind due regard to the rights of minorities. We know very well that it is the established law of Parliament—according to everyone who has written on the subject—that the first duty of the Speaker in this House is to preserve order, and the second duty is to protect the rights of minorities. Therefore, the placing in the Amendment, in express terms, of an indication to the Chair that it should have in mind at all times the rights of minorities is, in my opinion, a departure from all the previous written Rules of this House, and amounts to a reflection upon the Chair itself. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Roscommon (Dr. Commins) in the speech he just made

referred to the position of the Chair. We know what that position is. The Chair is the master of every individual Member of this House, because the Chair is entrusted with great powers with regard to individual Members. In recent times the Chair has had increased powers placed at its disposal, but with regard to the Members of this House collectively the Chair is not the master of the House. According to the highest authorities he is the servant of the House. Therefore, it is improper to thrust upon the Speaker anything which would interfere with his position as the servant of the whole body of the Members of this House, and would practically make him the judge of its proceedings. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in the speech he made this evening asked what was meant by the "evident sense of the House." I think it is extremely difficult to say what the evident sense of the House is at any time. We had experience here even as late as last night of an effort on the part of certain Members to manufacture what might be called "the evident sense of the House"—to manufacture a feeling by a system of uproar and turbulence that hon. Members who were discussing a question which to themselves appeared vital, and were discussing it in a fair and proper manner, were acting in defiance of the Chairman of Committees. Well, the right hon. Gentleman, so far as I understood him, defined "the evident sense of the House." It is impossible for the Speaker to know what is the current feeling and mind of the House unless that feeling is manifested by scenes of disorder such as we witnessed last night. This Rule is an invitation to hon. Gentlemen to be constantly interrupting the proceedings of the House by making noises and disturbances and crying out constantly to the Speaker to apply the *clôture*. If the "evident sense of the House" is not demonstrated in this way, how is it demonstrated? It cannot be defined by anything else. In 1882 the present Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart-Dyke), who was then the Whip of the Tory Party, spoke about having in a previous Parliament been constantly at the elbow of the Chairman of Committees urging him to get on with Supply. I can well understand that proceeding, and in the future I can well understand a Govern-

ment Whip making an unfair use of the Rules in order to push on Supply. We know that in the majority of instances—although that is not so at the present time—the Chairman of Committees is a very strong Party man and would very seldom have the courage to resist an application to stifle discussion in this House on the part of his own Leader. We do not know what Speakers may occupy the Chair in future years. In 1882 we had an historical disquisition upon the characters of some Speakers in the past—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not now speaking at all relevantly to the Question of the veto of the Chair in certain specified cases.

MR. M. J. KENNY: I will address myself, Sir, strictly to the more limited view of the Question. I was only showing that it would be unfair of the Leader of the House, or any other Member of the Government for the time being, to seek, when trying to apply the *clôture*, to shelter himself behind the Chair, and that the responsibility should be entirely thrown on the Member making the Motion; and in the second case I was trying to show—though I will now discontinue that line of argument—that it could be possible at some future time for this proviso to be a sham and a delusion by reason of the fact that some future Speaker might not exercise his powers in the manner that our experience leads us to expect that you, Sir, would apply them. That was my only object in referring to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Shropshire on the same point in 1882. I would remind the House that there is a *Clôture* Rule at present in existence, and that whether the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford is carried or not, you will have power vested in the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees to take the initiative. When you pass this Rule, therefore, you will have him either taking the initiative, or waiting for someone to move the *clôture*. I do not conceive how it is possible, except by adopting the Motion of the hon. Member for Bedford, to know clearly where we stand during the debate. If the Government Amendment is adopted, it will mean that the Government Resolution, as it now stands, will fall through, and that the initiation of the *clôture* will in one instance rest exclusively with the

Members of the Government or of the House without reference to Mr. Speaker; and in another instance the Speaker may apply the *clôture* of his own motion. I can conceive nothing more irregular, and nothing more likely to lead to confusion, than that we should have two distinct Rules dealing with the same subject existing at the same time on the Orders of the House. The Rule under the circumstances I have noted might be described as a species of double-barrelled Rule. I hold that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford should be accepted, because it will clear away at least one difficulty, and define the position of Leaders of the House and Members of the Government, and define as clearly as at the present time the position of the Chair. I venture to say, whatever the result of the discussion may be, that the acceptance of the Government *Clôture* Rule will not in the slightest degree improve the deliberations of this House. It will lead to confusion, and make confusion worse confounded. I think that instead of forwarding discussion, and expediting debate and the transaction of Business, it will make them slower and more difficult than at the present time.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I must say I ought to feel flattered by the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury, as it is practically an Amendment which I put down on the Paper myself. But, nevertheless, I shall vote against the Amendment, because the only reason why I put it down was because I thought the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford might not be carried, and then my Amendment would be an alternative. I fully admit that the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury is a great improvement on his original draft of the Rule of Procedure, because there is a great advantage between not withholding and giving an assent. Still, if the Chair does not withhold its assent, it does practically express its opinion; and though that opinion would be a tacit one, a great number of Members feel that when the Chair expresses an opinion they ought to abdicate their own, and support the view of the Chair. Therefore, I do not think if the Chair were even tacitly to express an opinion in this matter that the appeal to the House would be perfectly independent. The First Lord

of the Treasury alluded to an Amendment of mine in 1882, as also did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I think they were mistaken as to what my Amendment was. They seemed to be under the impression that I proposed that no one would speak more than half-an-hour. That was not my proposal. It was this, that after a debate had taken place and it was thought that the matter had been thoroughly discussed, that instead of the *clôture* we should adopt, when Mr. Speaker is in the Chair, a 10 minutes' Rule.

MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the Question before the House is the veto of the Speaker in certain cases.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Well, Sir, if the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman is adopted it certainly does seem to me that some additional words will have to be put into the Rule, because, so far as I can perceive, it would enable any hon. Member to get up at any moment and propose that the debate should close. Well, the probability is that when passions are excited a Gentleman will get up after each Member has spoken and propose that the debate ought to close, and then we shall divide. I shall vote in favour of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford; but I do so thinking that if it is carried we shall have further to amend the Rule of Procedure as it stands, in order to prevent the annoying and troublesome proceeding of a Gentleman getting up and proposing the *clôture* after each Member has spoken.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 177; Noes 130: Majority 47.—(Div. List, No. 40.)

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Mr. Speaker, there are two Amendments standing in my name—the first is in line 3 of the right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. W. H. Smith) Amendment, after "and" to leave out the words to the end of the line, and insert—

"It shall be made to appear to the Chair after such discussion as the Chair may permit, that opportunity for debate on the Question has been afforded and that such Motion is not,"

and the second is to leave out the words—"An abuse of the Rules of the House or" in line 4. I understand the second Amendment is the one you will receive at this stage.

[*Eighth Night.*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is competent for the hon. Gentleman to move to leave out the words—"An abuse of the Rules of the House or."

MR. O'DOHERTY: So I presumed, Mr. Speaker, and it was that Amendment I rose to move. The effect of the Amendment is, that after a Member has risen in his place and moved the *clôture*, a discussion may be addressed to you in a judicial capacity; and after such discussion, which may be as long or as short as you think fit, you shall decide whether or not the proposition, "That the Question be now put," shall go. I propose that the question for your judicial decision shall then be, not whether the hon. Member who made the Motion is guilty of the abuse of the Rules of the House, but whether the continuance of the debate on that particular question, and under the circumstances, is not itself an abuse of the Rules of the House. Thus will be placed between the action of an irresponsible Member and the freedom of debate, your judicial decision after a discussion. The object of this Amendment is that there shall be in your intervention something that will be a guarantee for freedom of speech; but by the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) you will be placed in a position of some difficulty. If an hon. Member moves that the Question be now put, you must either put the Motion or rule that the Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House. You will be relieved from such a difficulty if my Amendment is adopted. I do not intend to labour my proposition by any lengthened observations. I confess I have no faith in either of the safeguards; I have no faith in the mere majority or in the mere interposition of the Chair. I have endeavoured to interpose something of a time rule, something of a number rule, something of a rule of responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment of the hon. Gentleman is to leave out the words, "an abuse of the Rules of the House or." That has nothing to do with the subject the hon. Gentleman is now referring to.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I am very sorry if I have not kept strictly and logically to the question. The position is that any Member may rise at any time, and, notwithstanding that there has been no discussion, or only short and inadequate

discussion, move that the Question be put; and the presumption in your mind must be, under the Rule proposed by the First Lord of the Treasury that he is right. You must then put the Question, though you may doubt that the Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House. I submit that is not a position in which you should be put, and I propose that you should be able to satisfy yourself, after discussion, whether the Motion is, or is not, an abuse of the Rules. I ask the House not to decide in favour of the *clôture* until it has been proved that the *clôture* is necessary.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, line 4, leave out "an abuse of the Rules of the House or."—(*Mr. O'Doherty.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said proposed Amendment."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty) proposes that there shall practically be a debate upon the Question, "that the Question be now put," or, in other words, that when an hon. Member moves that the Question be now put, the Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, shall be called upon to arrive at a decision as to whether or not the Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, and he shall do so after discussion. I am bound to say that if it is necessary to have a debate upon the Question, that the Question be now put, the closure will be altogether inoperative. I think the hon. Gentleman himself will see that a provision such as he proposes would only impede, and not assist the progress of Business.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury thinks that if a discussion were allowed on the Question "that the Question be now put," it would be useless to have the *clôture* at all. He seems to forget that what my hon. Friend (Mr. O'Doherty) proposes is in work in the Continental Parliaments, in which the *clôture* is most actively employed. If I mistake not, in the Austrian Parliament there is a right on the part of the Leader of the House and on the part of the Leader of the regular

Opposition, to address the Chair on the Question "that the Question be now put." My hon. Friend simply desires that there shall be in this House a right to address the Chair on the part of such Members as the Chair may think fit to allow to speak when the clôtüre has been moved. I am persuaded that if the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would give some further consideration to this matter, he would see the great advantage which would be likely to ensue from the right being conferred, at the discretion of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, upon such responsible Members of the House as may be named to address the House upon the Motion in question.

MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): If this Amendment were adopted, one of two things would be necessary, either that we should define in the Amendment who are to conduct the further discussion which is desired, or else that we should lay upon the Chair—

MR. SPEAKER: I think there is some misconception in the minds of hon. Members as to what Amendment is before the House. Judging from the remarks which have been made, hon. Gentlemen are referring to the Amendment which stands lower down on the Paper, in the name of the hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty), and not to the Amendment to omit the words "an abuse of the Rules of the House or." I am at a loss to see how the question of a further discussion on the Question that the Question be now put, can be brought in on an Amendment to leave out the words "an abuse of the Rules of the House or."

MR. C. S. PARKER: I only alluded, in passing, to the words proposed to be inserted in place of those to be left out. The words in question—"an abuse of the Rules"—seem both inappropriate and unnecessary. I should think that, under the existing Standing Orders, there is sufficient power to deal with any abuse of the Rules of the House. If these words were omitted, I should be prepared to suggest other words; but, at present, it would be out of Order to do so.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin Harbour): It appears to me that the First Lord of the Treasury completely misunderstands the scope of the Amend-

ment. We have a perfect analogy to the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for North Donegal in the case in which an hon. Member rises and claims the right to address the Chair upon a point of Order. It is evident the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury did not read carefully the terms of the Amendment, which says—

"It shall be made to appear to the Chair, after such discussion, as the Chair may permit, that opportunity for Debate on the Question has been afforded—"

MR. SPEAKER: Order, Order! It is quite obvious that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. C. Harrington), like the other hon. Gentleman who has spoken, is in error as to the Amendment before the House. The Amendment under consideration is to leave out "an abuse of the Rules of the House or."

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: If I am in error I am only following the error of the hon. Gentleman who proposed that Amendment, because undoubtedly my hon. Friend moved the second Amendment which stands in his name, and it was to that that the First Lord of the Treasury addressed himself.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman. If the hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty) moved his subsequent Amendment it is out of Order.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I merely wished to get the words of the First Lord of the Treasury out of the way in order to move my Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is now doubly out of Order in moving that Amendment. It is a re-assertion of the opportunity of debate which the House has decided shall not take place. The House has decided that the Question is to be put forthwith, and the hon. Gentleman proposes that it is not to be put forthwith, but only after discussion.

[The Amendment was not put.]

MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the omission of the words "or an infringement of the rights of the minority." The whole of the argument I addressed to the House on Wednesday last really turned upon the Question whether duties or privileges of this kind should be cast on the Chair, and I do not propose to trouble the House by repeating the argument. I will content myself with saying that of all the proposals which have been made to put

[*Eighth Night.*]

duties of this kind on the Chair, this Amendment seems to me to be the most vague, and to leave to the Chair the least possible guide.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "or an infringement of the rights of the minority."—(*Mr. Whitbread*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said proposed Amendment."

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): We have come at last to what a good many of us, at all events—I do not venture to say how many—consider to be the real subject at issue between a great number of persons in the House; and that is, whether it is wise to put upon the Speaker the duty of what is called protecting the minority. The protection of the minority is a popular phrase, and I ask the House to consider what it means and how it affects the position of the Speaker. There is also another popular phrase. We hear it often said that the Speaker is an impartial Judge in this House. Now, if the Speaker is a judge, I am sure he is an impartial judge, but I venture to say, upon all my reading and knowledge of Parliamentary history and Parliamentary law, that the Speaker is not and never has been a judge in this House—I mean a judge of the conduct of the House in general. The Speaker has an absolute authority over individuals in this House. He decides questions of Order, he interprets the Rules of the House, but upon the conduct of the House itself he is not a judge at all, and never has been so—in my opinion never can be so, and never ought to be so. If you look at some of the books upon Parliamentary liberties, such as *Hatsell's Precedents*, published in days when people expressed themselves in a blunter way than they do now, you find it stated that the Speaker is not the master or the master's mate of the House, but the servant of the House. The difference between the authority of the Speaker over individuals, over questions of Order, and over interpretations of the Rules on the one hand, and the determining of what ought to be the conduct of the House in any particular matter on the other hand, is a distinction of a most important character, which has existed from the earliest times. You are now proposing to put the Speaker in a

position with reference to the House that he has never occupied since the House of Commons existed, and that, I think, is a very material question for you to consider. If the Speaker is to be a judge as to whether this Motion is to be put, —why not a judge as to whether any Motion should be put, why not a judge of the propriety, expediency, or opportuneness of any Motion? Then it is said that the Speaker is to have a veto. Now, a veto cannot be exercised by anybody who has not an authority independent of the authority of those over whom he wields the veto. The Sovereign can veto a Bill, but the Sovereign is a separate estate of the Realm. Is the Speaker a separate estate of the Realm in his relation to the House of Commons? What is the meaning of the name of Speaker? The Speaker is the person who speaks the will of the House, the voice of the House, the determination of the majority of the House. When we speak of the House we mean the majority of the House. When a Member moves "that in the opinion of the House," he means that the majority is of opinion; if he moves a Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government, he means the majority of the House. The Speaker has never yet in Parliamentary history had an existence or action otherwise than as the organ of the House. It is extraordinary that this Constitutional doctrine should have been so forgotten and passed over in all these discussions. You must remember what the Speaker is—that he is the organ of the House—and never existed, and never ought to have existed—in any other capacity. To treat him as a separate estate of the Realm, with power to veto the decisions of the House, is entirely to misconceive the character of the Speaker, and to revolutionize his position. I think that the old Rule—that introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*)—is a good deal better than this Rule, though I admit it has failed. The old Rule never professed that the Speaker did anything else except express the will of the majority of the House; and that is what is the duty of the Office of the Speaker. Under the old Rule the Speaker had no divided responsibility. Under this Rule his responsibility will be divided. Under the old Rule what we desired was, that the position of the Speaker should be entirely independent,

and I am sure it has been. The Speaker formed an independent opinion and announced it to the House; but it is the House, and the House alone, that can determine a question. Well, as I say, the existing Rule desires to achieve and safeguard the independence of the Speaker. I am sorry to say the Rule has failed in that respect, because, as I pointed out the other night, journals that ought to be well informed, but which are very ignorant of Constitutional principles with regard to the conduct of the Speaker, instead of treating the Speaker as an independent authority, salute him and cheer him as a confederate of the Government. We know, Sir, that is not true. We know perfectly well that, under the Rule, you would no more consult the Government as to the exercise of the *clôture* than you would consult the Opposition. Your Office, which, I am sure, you perform with perfect impartiality, demands that you should arrive at a determination quite irrespective of both; but that does not prevent papers like *The Times* stating exactly the opposite. Well, under this Rule, I am afraid the danger would be still greater, because it is not proposed that you shall move in the matter, but that you shall be moved by somebody else. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian has already said that you must be moved in this matter by the majority, and the majority is generally the Government. The Speaker ought not to be moved to allow the *clôture* unless he thinks it will be carried. Will he be less exposed to criticism when he is moved by somebody than when he is moved by nobody? I should think he will be more exposed to criticism when moved by somebody. What we ought to do is to free the Speaker from criticism. If he grants the *clôture*, or does not forbid it, he will be criticized by the minority; if he refuses it he will be criticized by the majority. There is another very great evil in this. If the Speaker ever ceases to be what he is now—the organ and the voice of the House, that is, of the majority of the House—you never can have what we have had with so much advantage to the House—a Speaker continuing in Office through numerous Parliaments and with different Political Parties. A constant change of Speaker would be a very great evil. Lord Eversley and

Lord Hampden, who were Speakers in various Parliaments and under different Party Leaders, possessed the confidence of the House and of each Party. Why? For the same reason that your permanent Civil Servants, and your Ambassadors abroad, have your confidence under different Administrations. They are the mere mouth-pieces—the mere agents of the persons by whom they are employed. It is absolutely incompatible with the exercise of this Rule that any Speaker can continue under two Administrations. Why are we going to do all this? Who is in favour of it? I do not know that the Government are very much in favour of it. It is not their original proposal; but who are against it? Whatever may be the Party feelings in the House everybody will respect the opinion of the oldest and most experienced Parliamentarian in the House, my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone). Well, he is against it. Then, I do not think there is anybody in the House who will dispute that one of the greatest Parliamentary authorities in the House, known for his consideration and fairness, is my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). He is against it. The Chairman of Committee of Ways and Means (Mr. Courtney), who has to exercise the power of the *clôture*, is against it. There is a fourth person, my right hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) than whom no one has greater influence in the House—and deservedly so—and he is not in favour of the Government's proposal. The noble Lord said that—

“As regards the closure, my own opinion has always been, since I became convinced of the necessity of limiting the length of debates—a conviction which I formed six or seven years ago—in favour of adopting the most simple and most practical form of giving the House that control over the length of its discussions. I agree with a great deal of what fell from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) last night. Personally, I have not the slightest apprehension as to the probability that the power of the closure would be abused. I do not think I am subject to the panic fears about which my right hon. Friend spoke. I think it would not be to the advantage of a majority to abuse the power of closure, however stringent and however drastic that power might be. I believe that what would be considered in the country an unfair use of the power of closing debate would act injuriously upon the majority's own cause, and that there would be no temptation on the part of the majority, even a some-

[Fifth Night.]

what intolerant majority, to resort to unfair means of suppressing debate. Further, I believe with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) that in the Assemblies where the simple form of closure has been adopted, and where Party spirit is certainly quite as prevalent as among us, and where passions are rife, it has not in practice been found that the power of closure or limiting the length of debates has been abused. Therefore, I still maintain the opinion I have always personally held on this subject—that it is not necessary to surround the use of the closing of debate by so many limitations and restrictions as the timidity of some hon. Members seems to suggest. Personally, I should not be in the least afraid to see a system of closure voted by a bare majority without any intervention on the part of the Chair, and limited only by the presence of what might be considered to be a sufficient quorum.”—
(3 *Hansard*, [311] 311.)

Well, now, that is an answer to the eloquent declamation of the noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners). My noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) has none of the apprehensions that are entertained by the noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith). He agrees with us in opinion. It may be it is the hard fate of his present position that, contrary to his opinion, he will vote for the Government. But it is the opinion of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale that all the panic terrors are idle and bogus fears; he would rather see closure pure and simple—one without any of these absurd restrictions. Now, what is it the Speaker is to do? He is to see that there is no infringement of the rights of the minority. I really must complain of this language. It is not Parliamentary language. It is a slipshod, penny-a-line, or a boarding-school-miss sort of language. Let us have something we can understand—something which has a Parliamentary meaning. Now, what is a minority? I see the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) in his place, and I understand he is going to speak. There is no man better able to give a correct definition of “minority” than the right hon. Gentleman. Let us hear his definition of “minority,” and what are its rights, and what is an infringement of those rights? These are admirable themes for the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen), and I am sure he will deal with them admirably. At present, the Speaker knows a minority;

he knows it from the Tellers at the Table. The Tellers are called Tellers because they tell the Speaker which is the majority and which the minority; and the Speaker is called Speaker because, having been told which is the majority and which the minority, he acts upon his information and announces the fact to the world. That is the true Constitutional position of the Speaker. But who, under this Rule, are to be his secret Tellers? Who are to tell him secretly, so that he may determine before a Division is taken which is the majority and which the minority? I am afraid that, in the present state of the House, it will be difficult for anyone to tell which is the majority and which is the minority. I am sorry that the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale is not here, because it is only the noble Lord who can tell the Speaker which side of the House is going to have a majority. In fact, there is no majority in this House at all. The question as to who is the majority is like one of those complicated problems in algebra which I once knew, but have now forgotten, and which the Chancellor of the Exchequer doubtless recollects—the permutations of two and two taken together, which I believe are infinite in their results. That is the only way in which you can compound a majority. How is the Speaker to ascertain the minority? I suppose we must all wear badges. There must be a majority badge, and this minority which is to be protected I suppose must wear a minority badge; but they will be infinite in number, and I understand that there will be a primrose badge for Gentlemen opposite. Then, I suppose, the Irish Members will wear a shamrock badge, the Welsh Members a leek, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) will, I suppose, wave the Union Jack. If we all wear these badges the Speaker will at once be able to decide who are the majority, and who are the minority whose rights are to be protected from infringement. I want the House to understand the really absurd character of this proposal—for so it is when you come to practice—for you say that the Speaker is to protect the rights of minorities. Well, now, the rights of minorities are protected by the Rules of the House, and I think quite adequately protected. They do not want

any more protection, in my opinion; but they are to be further protected, and how? By the opinion and judgment of the Speaker. I remember that Selden, in his *Table Talk*, objected to the system of equity, because it depends on no known rules, but upon the length of the Chancellor's foot; and, in like manner, the protection of the minority in future will depend upon the opinion of the Speaker for the time being, and that, I think, is not much of a Magna Charta for the protection of minorities. It seems to me, therefore, that the proposal before the House is altogether insufficient for the protection of the rights of minorities. But it is not all minorities that are to be protected, because that would be absurd. A single man sometimes constitutes a minority. You must speculate on the character of the minority, the number of the minority, and whether or not it deserves to be protected; and that is a kind of speculation in which, in my opinion, you ought never to involve the Speaker of this House. What is the right of a minority? I ask my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell us. One of the rights of a minority seems to be that they should have the right to speak. If that is not the right of a minority, I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will explain it, and say what would be an infringement of it. For my part, I have always been entirely against this theory of protecting the rights of minorities. Now, I have a friend in the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he is not a Protectionist even though he sits on the opposite side of the House. I think he is against Protection in all its forms. The fact is that Protection stunts and ruins everything it touches, and it will ruin minorities. I do not, in the least degree, wish to see a protected minority. Gentlemen opposite are a protected minority. They are not protected by the Speaker; they are protected by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale. But it appears to me to have a prejudicial effect upon them; they seem to derive from it no benefit or advantage. We have plenty of minorities in this House, and we can consider whether they require protection. There is, for instance, the minority below the Gangway of hon. Members for Ireland. I do not know that those hon. Members look with particular favour upon this proposal to protect their rights, looking

at the terms of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); and I should venture to suggest to those hon. Members that it would be extremely unwise for them to place any great reliance on the protection which the Government propose to afford them. They have already sufficient protection for their rights; they have, in the first place, the protection of the opinion of their own countrymen, and they have the protection of a large number of English and Scotch Members in this House; they have, I venture to say, a protection in the justice and wisdom of hon. Members opposite; and, finally, they have the protection of a large number of Englishmen outside the doors of the House. Then there is the small majority of Dissident Liberals. They do not want protection. They are the protectors; they are the spoilt children of the House; they are the favourites of both sides, and, therefore, I cannot conceive that they want protection of any kind. Then I come to the humbler body whom we represent—a middle-sized minority. Well, Sir, I beg to assure the First Lord of the Treasury that we do not desire any protection at all; we can take very good care of ourselves. I have very little opinion of minorities who go whining for protection to the Speaker. The idea reminds me of a boy at school who, when he gets the worst of a fight, says, "I will go and tell mother." It seems to me preposterous that you should want the minority to go running to the Speaker for protection. No, Sir; I learned in the best school; I marched in the army of a minority under the lead of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale between the years 1874 and 1880. The House has not forgotten, and the Liberal Party has not forgotten, those days. We wanted no protection; we were beaten over and over again by a greater majority than you have now. We were once beaten by a majority of 140, and we were proud of it. I ask the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to this—we were dreadfully unpatriotic in those days; we attacked the Government on their foreign policy in every part of the world. I am glad that the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale has returned to the House, because I was speaking of those grand old days when, under his lead, as I was

telling the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we attacked the foreign policy of the Government in every part of the world. We went at them over and over again; and I remember my noble Friend said that, if necessary, he would move a Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government every month, to which I replied, "The only mistake we make is that we do not do it every week." The Liberal minority did not want protection in those days. We did not run and hide our heads under the Speaker's gown. We were beaten over and over again, but in 1880 we won the battle; and, therefore, on behalf of the middle-sized minority, I utterly decline this eleemosynary protection. Of course, in those days we were exceedingly abused; we were called unpatriotic by the right hon. Gentleman the then Chancellor of the Exchequer; we were told at the time that our first duty was to support the Government. But we did not support them, and a very good thing it was that we did not. The Conservative Party were then in a very large majority, and they howled us down a good deal. But it did not do us any harm, and we went on our way rejoicing. But supposing the Government had had the closure then, and put us down; what would have happened? Why, the victory of 1880 would have come two or three years sooner. We should have gone to the country and said—"We have these charges to make, and we cannot make them in the House of Commons, so we must make them elsewhere." What would have been the result? I will tell what would have been shut up—not the minority, but the House of Commons. That is always what will happen in these days, when the Press is disseminating knowledge throughout the country, and a man can go and make a speech wherever he likes. I recollect the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) once saying to me in my early Parliamentary days—"If you have to say anything that you want the country to attend to, do not say it in the House of Commons, because there it is mixed up with a good deal of other stuff." And my right hon. Friend added—"Take a quiet time in the autumn, when the newspapers have nothing to do. You will have your say; they will abuse you for a fortnight, and the country will then understand what you have to say." It is

absurd to suppose you can shut out the opinion of minorities. For my part, I am content with this protection of minorities. If we cannot discuss foreign affairs, Home Rule, or anything else in the House of Commons, there are a hundred other places in the country where we can, and we shall be fifty times more attended to, because we cannot discuss them in this House. Therefore, let hon. Members not be in the least afraid of the closure, because in this country you cannot stifle discussion. I believe I have exhausted the question of minorities. Oh, yes; there is one other minority which I have not dealt with, and that is the minority opposite. Now, so far as I know, they are the only minority in this House which really seems to desire or to require protection. I am sorry for this, but it is, I suppose, the remains of an old habit. I suppose they have a slight distrust of the crutch, and that in those unfortunate Resolutions which they have brought forward I suppose they are building for themselves a city of refuge from the wrath to come. I would recommend them to take courage. I rather complain of my noble Friend who protects them, because he has not imparted to them some of his common sense. Surely they would have taken his advice if he had told them that all this terror of the opposition of minorities is idle. My noble Friend does not believe this proposal to be necessary; he said himself that he does not approve it, but he assents to it on account of the timorous disposition of Gentlemen opposite. Now, why should you be so fearful of being oppressed? You think, perhaps, you are coming over to this side. You did pretty well when you were here before; why should you not do well again? I suppose you will bring the Chancellor of the Exchequer with you, and he will teach you to rely on his protection. It seems to me that these terrors are entirely misplaced. For the great Conservative Party to be so alarmed lest an accident should befall them seems to me absurd. Are they afraid that the tyranny of my hon. Friend the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) should extinguish them, and grind them to powder? That is the argument of the First Lord of the Treasury, and it is the only argument. Why, Sir, if the doctrine of my hon. Friend

were to be taken seriously—which I do not think it can be—I am afraid that he would not have a Speaker in the Chair who would be at all disposed to protect the minority; and, if that is so, this safeguard is worthless. What, then, are the objections to accepting a simple and manly closure, which I have always advocated, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian advocated, and which the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale and the hon. Member for Bedford approve? It is said that the House will be more liable to surprise without the Speaker's interference; but why? An hon. Gentleman will jump up and demand the closure; and the Speaker will have to decide upon the spot whether or not it is an infringement of the rights of the minority. In a great Party fight the Speaker might not find it difficult to determine; but there are a great many occasions on which there are not Party fights; and how is the Speaker to decide, when he cannot have the remotest idea as to whether the rights of the minority are infringed or not? I will tell you who will be taken by surprise under your Rule, and that will be the Speaker. Are you going to expose him every instant, and on every occasion, to the difficulty of giving an instant decision upon the challenge of every Member of the House? Then we are told that the Rule will prevent Obstruction; and, as to that, we are, I am glad to say, all agreed to the Rule being used against Obstruction if it be possible. As to the responsibility of the Speaker, that will be just as great, whether he has to say "Yes" or "No" under the Rule. The Speaker will be equally responsible; and, though you may alter the form, the substance of the responsibility will remain the same. From whatever point of view I look at this matter, it seems to me equally objectionable. First of all, I have said, it is contrary to the Constitutional position which the Speaker has occupied from time immemorial. To give him a veto, is to say that he shall resist the will of the majority of this House in favour of the interests of the minority. It is making him the master of the House; making him a separate estate from the House; placing him in the position of saying to the House, you wish to do this thing, but, in my opinion, you ought not, and you shall not

do it. Now, I say that no Speaker in the House of Commons has ever been placed in such a position as that; and, in my opinion, he ought not to be so placed now. Apart from that, it will be almost impossible for him to ascertain who are the minority, and what are its rights; but I am perfectly certain that, by imposing this duty upon him, you will infallibly bring upon him a great deal of undesirable criticism from the Party he disappoints; it will expose him to a species of insidious criticism, from which it should be our first object to protect him, and the oftener the closure is used the more frequent will that criticism be. For all these reasons, I think, Sir, that these words ought to be struck out, for they are words which will not increase the Order of the House, but rather disorder in it; they will not strengthen the House for the transaction of Business, but rather weaken it.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Sir, at an earlier period of the evening my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) made a speech, in which, at the outset, he deprecated the adoption of a controversial or Party tone in the discussion of this question. I leave it to the House to judge to what extent the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has followed the instructions of his absent Chief. My right hon. Friend is very great at speaking on the position of Parties; but one would imagine that he was thinking far more of the present situation than looking to the future efficiency and dignity of the House of Commons. Her Majesty's Government, at all events, will endeavour to approach the subject, bearing in mind that they have not simply to do with the present anomalous position of affairs; but that in dealing with the course of procedure of this ancient Assembly, it is our duty to see that in the future the Rules we are endeavouring to introduce shall be efficient, and conduce to the proper conduct of affairs. If we are to look simply to the present, I can quite understand the natural impatience of hon. Members in the various parts of the House to have the most effective and drastic system of closure that can be devised. But hon.

[*Eighth Night.*]

Members must exercise some self-restraint in this matter, lest, in their anxiety to deal with present difficulties, they should introduce a system of regulations which would impair the future efficiency of this House. It has been a spectacle of delicious irony to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby turn round to the Irish Party to reconcile them to a closure without the intervention of the Speaker! It is not the first time, however, that we have enjoyed the spectacle. Indeed, it is a common sight now-a-days to see my right hon. Friend taking his nightly draught of that juice in which he once said he would leave his opponents to stew. In the earlier portion of his speech, my right hon. Friend repeatedly asked me for a definition of a minority; and he began to expound his own views of it, and to describe the various minorities in this House. Practically, the right hon. Gentleman himself defined it, and, in doing so, he seemed to be almost playing upon words. There is no Member in this House who has insisted with greater determination than he has on what he calls the rights of the minority; and if he asks me what is the minority, I say that it is the complement of a majority. I think, Mr. Speaker, that anyone in this House who looks to the substance of things knows very well what is meant by the protection of the minority. It is another question which has been fairly raised—whether minorities require what is termed protection; but as to what minorities are, and what the rights of minorities mean, that must be apparent to the common sense of every Member of the House who does not wish to play upon words. Have we not heard, time after time, hon. Members, especially some of those who most loudly cheered the speech of my right hon. Friend, protesting against the suppression of the rights of minorities? What, then, do the Government mean by the words of the Rule which are in question? We mean by them that every section in the House shall be entitled to a fair hearing, and that if in a moment of excitement and temper a fleeting majority, heated by passion, and, perhaps, by the obstruction and the manoeuvres of a minority, endeavour to apply the closure—then the calmer spirit of the Chair shall interfere to protect

the minority from a wrong for which, if it were committed, the majority would be afterwards sorry. It is not enough to say that the majority would be punished subsequently. There is something we must look to even more than the interest of any majority or any minority, and that is the interest of the House at large. It is no answer to say that the majority would be punished. The character of the House might suffer as well as the character of the majority. I once asked an ex-Prime Minister of France what was his experience of the *clôture*, and his answer was—"I have suffered under it, and I have abused it." We do not desire that the British House of Commons, or that its Ministers or its legitimate Opposition should either suffer under the closure or abuse it; and, therefore, it is thought right and expedient that something should be interposed between the impatience of the majority and the decision of the House. My right hon. Friend has not so much anxiety about the House losing the approbation and confidence of the country, because he looks with a kind of satisfaction to the possibility of airing his views upon platforms out-of-doors. I admit that I have had pleasant evidence of the fact that my right hon. Friend is a magnificent platform orator. But those who believe in the future of the House of Commons, and who wish that it should be equal to its duties, do not desire that there should be a breakdown of its machinery in order that the discussion of the affairs of the nation should be transferred from the floor of this House to another arena. A security which might suffice for the protection of the minority might yet not be sufficient to preserve the dignity and authority of the House. Let me call the attention of the House to the weighty speech of the Chairman of Ways and Means, at an earlier stage of the evening. The hon. Gentleman said that precaution must be taken against the decision of the fleeting majority of the evening; and he proposed a majority of two-thirds or three-fifths—that is to say he protested, as I am now protesting, against placing the decision of the House as to the continuance of a debate simply in the hands of the majority. My right hon. Friend very skilfully endeavoured to argue the question at issue on the ground of fear; but I rather venture to

place it on the efficiency and dignity of the House. My right hon. Friend also spoke of the increased weight of the responsibility which would be cast upon the Chair, which he considered to be one heavier than the Chair could sustain; and on that ground, as well as on grounds of Party, he was against vesting this discretion in the Chair. As to the weight of responsibility cast upon the Chair, I wish to be allowed to examine that matter. My right hon. Friend knows one responsibility which now rests upon the Chair; but there is another responsibility, not visible to the eyes of hon. Members, which now weighs upon the Speaker or Chairman, and that is, the negative responsibility of sitting in the Chair for a long time, when the subject of debate is exhausted by frivolous iterations, impotent to help the House and unable to expedite Business. Does it not place a great responsibility upon the Speaker to feel that the weapon in his hands is not one that he can rely upon to expedite the Business of the House? My right hon. Friend, and I believe the great majority in this House, are not satisfied that the Business of the House is progressing as it ought to do. Upon that, I presume, we are fairly unanimous, though I have not heard any opinion expressed by those who mainly cheer my right hon. Friend as to the unsatisfactory condition of Business of the House. Is not the Irish Party satisfied with it? [*Cries of "No, no!"*] No! then for once we are agreed. I believe we are agreed that further progress must be made, and the issue is whether we are to have closure by a simple decision of the majority of the House at any moment, undefined in any manner, or whether we shall place a certain discretion in hands which we trust and believe will be strong and powerful enough and impartial enough to all sides of the House. That is really the issue we have to decide. The Government do wish to place something between the impatient desire of the majority and the minority. It is not from any present anxiety to serve our own interests, but because we look to the future. It is because we look to the future of the House, because we are warned by many circumstances which have taken place, that we do not think the patience of the House can be trusted with such complete confidence as is expressed by the

calm and passionless right hon. Member for Derby. We know full well that if the right hon. Gentleman should be pressed by his new allies below the Gangway; if he should be pressed by the ranks who sit behind him, but whose cheers do not in any degree equal in warmth those of his new adherents; if he should be pressed by all the forces that sit behind him, yet with that calm spirit of his so free from any Party bias, my right hon. Friend, if he occupied the position which his great talents and experience in the House entitle him to hold, would restrain those passions and refuse to go forward, and the minority would not be so safe in any hands as his. But still, as we have not the security that the House will always be led by a man so temperate and so passionless, we must trust to other expedients. We hope that whatever may befall the House—whether it become more and more an Assembly needing the strong interposition of the Chair, or whether it again settle down to those calmer times in which debates were conducted with regularity and commanded the attention and respect of the country—we shall always be able to find Speakers and Chairmen of Ways and Means who will not break down under the responsibility which we propose to place upon them. The Government are not prepared to accept the closure by the majority pure and simple, free from any restrictions, and they adhere to the view that some safeguard should be taken for the protection of the minority and the future character of the House of Commons.

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): Sir, after the two impassioned speeches which we have just heard, I hope the House will allow me a few remarks—and they shall be a very few—purely from a business point of view. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite know that I have always been strongly in favour of an efficient Rule of Closure. I think the Government have, by the words which it has been decided are to remain in the Rule, got a more efficient power than we obtained when we discussed the matter formerly. It has now been decided that the Speaker or the Chairman may, if they desire, apply the Rules of the House to prevent any obstructive Motion in regard to the closure of debate. But I cannot help remarking that the right hon. Gentle-

[*Eighth Night.*]

man who just sat down did not direct one remark to the Motion before the House. He did not state whether he intended to oppose or to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bedford. It is quite clear, as the Leader of the House said, that the Rule diminishes the responsibility of the Speaker; but if we add the words to the effect that he must protect the rights of minorities, we shall vastly increase the responsibility of the Speaker, and it is to that point I wish to direct the attention of the Leader of the House. The Speaker occupies a perfectly neutral position in regard to our debates, and is the protector neither of the minority nor of the majority. If, however, we introduce into the Rule the words as to the "infringement of the rights of the minority" we shall immediately make the Speaker come into collision both with the majority and the minority. By the words which the House has already passed, we have got a clear and practical Rule, under which the Speaker has a warning that he is not to allow frivolous Motions of Closure, and that he is to intervene and prevent abuses of the Rule. We have the responsibility of the House itself for the closure, and the Speaker will be kept from being a party on either side. That is the neutral position which the Speaker already holds; and I believe that if we now drop out the words "infringement of the rights of the minority" our closure would be a fair and also an efficient one. On the other hand, if we retain those words, I believe that the Rule will be inoperative in ordinary cases; while in extraordinary times; when there is much excitement in the House, the Speaker will be brought into constant collision with both sides of the House. I therefore hope that the Government will consider whether it is not desirable to make that Rule simple and effective, and to remove from it those words which will destroy it as a working Rule and also endanger the authority of the Chair.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): It is not very easy to discover what is the exact position of some of my right hon. Friends who sit on this Bench in regard to this question. The Opposition is summoned in the ordinary manner this afternoon to support the proposal of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), which is

an Amendment that will altogether exclude the intervention of the Chair from the operation of the closure under any and all circumstances. My hon. Friend the Member for Bedford, on Wednesday last, moved that Amendment, and supported it by a speech. It was supported by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), but no sooner had my hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Courtney) got up and shown the absolute necessity of the intervention of the Chair in certain circumstances, than a great change appeared to come over Gentlemen who sit on this Bench, and with the assent of those who sit on this side the hon. Member for Bedford asked leave to withdraw his Amendment. That permission was not granted, and, as I understand, those Members of the Opposition have tonight, notwithstanding the request thus made by the hon. Member for Bedford to withdraw it, voted in favour of the Amendment; and if they had been successful in the vote that was taken two hours ago the intervention of the Chair would have been absolutely prohibited. I myself, unfortunately, was not present during that part of the evening; but I cannot say that I understood what motives could induce Members at first to ask leave to withdraw an Amendment because they thought they had taken up an untenable position, and afterwards to vote in favour of it. I am sorry that I was not present during the greater part of the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, which created so much amusement in the House, but that part of it which I did hear I am bound to say appeared to me to be absolutely irrelevant to the question under discussion. I heard my right hon. Friend speaking of the patriotic conduct of the Opposition during the period from 1874 to 1880; and my right hon. Friend was proving greatly to his own satisfaction that the minority of that day was in no need of protection from the closure. Now I myself quite admit that the minority did not need protection at that time; but my right hon. Friend surely did not suppose that all minorities in all circumstances exist in an exactly similar position. What the Opposition at that former period were contending against, was not the extraordinary and inordinate appetite of right hon. Gentlemen

opposite for legislative changes; but what they rather complained of was that they were not sufficiently active, and did not bring forward legislation enough. And because, under those circumstances, they did not find that the minority was in need of any protection whatever, I do not think it follows that there never can be a minority placed in a totally different state of circumstances which might stand in need of some protection, or which might think itself in need of some protection, and which might require some safeguard against the violence and the vehemence of the innovating and revolutionary spirit of whatever Party might happen to be in power at the time. Therefore, whatever may have been the arguments adduced in the early part of the speech by my right hon. Friend, that part, at least, of his speech on which he drew upon his experience when in Opposition a few years ago was absolutely and entirely irrelevant to the question the House is now discussing. The only subject which the House has already decided is as to the intervention of the Chair, and that the operation of the closure in certain circumstances is to be permitted. What the House is now discussing is the comparatively limited question of what are to be the conditions under which that intervention is to take place. It has already been argued both by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and the hon. Member for Bedford that that intervention is absolutely unnecessary. Now, it is generally admitted that the intervention of the Chair is necessary, in order to prevent an abuse of the Rules of the House. It is further proposed by the Government that the intervention shall take place in certain circumstances for the protection of the privileges of debate. I am not concerned as to whether the words now proposed are absolutely the best which can be found; but I do not understand that any words which will be considered by the majority of the House an improvement on that form have yet been suggested, and certainly the reception which any endeavour by the right hon. Gentleman opposite to meet the objections taken by the Opposition side of the House has received has not as yet been found very greatly to facilitate the settling of this matter. I do not think the House is discussing

so much what is to be the actual form of words under which this intervention of the Chair is to take place as whether there is to be in any circumstances whatever an intervention on the part of the Chair for the protection of the ancient privileges of debate in the House. The question is whether, in the opinion of the majority of the House, it is desirable that the Chair shall in any circumstances intervene and allow the majority the exercise of its full powers for the simple suppression of debate? It is possible that such an intervention might be unnecessary altogether. On a previous occasion I expressed my opinion that there was an undue and unnecessary amount of timidity on this subject in various quarters of the House. I do not believe that it will ever be to the interest, permanently, of any great Party unduly to suppress discussion. But while I adhere to that opinion I, at the same time, most unhesitatingly express the opinion that I do not consider the proposal which is now made by the Government will in the slightest degree increase or injuriously affect the responsibility which now rests on the Chair in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian argued that the responsibility placed on the Chair and the adoption of this proposal would so enormously increase the burden reposing on the Chair, that it would be almost impossible to find any man to undertake the work. I absolutely and entirely differ from my right hon. Friend in that contention, and maintain that the change now proposed in the Rule regarding the operation of the closure does not increase, but on the contrary greatly diminishes, the responsibility which rests on the Chair. The right hon. Gentleman also said that no responsibility rests on the Chair now. I question that statement altogether; and when the right hon. Gentleman argues that the responsibility would be increased, I reply that one practical example would be worth a great deal more than the arguments which are bestowed on the House. The House has already in the course of the discussion had the closure applied once by the Speaker, after 16 days' debate, on the Address to the Throne. Now, in the opinion of a very large number of hon. Members—I should think a very large majority—the debate on the Address might have been

very advantageously concluded not in 16 days but in eight days; possibly, in the opinion of a great many, in four days; possibly, in the opinion of some, in two days. I wish to ask the House whether, if the Speaker had thought fit to interfere at the end of the eighth day, or the fourth day, or the second day, he would not have been taking, under the present Rule, an enormous responsibility on himself; and whether he would not incur far less responsibility if, under the Rule as proposed by the Government, he simply permitted the judgment of the House to be expressed on the Motion of an hon. Member as to whether the debate on the fourth day or the eighth day should not be closed? It seems to me that the answer is self-evident. The hon. Member for Bedford says that a new responsibility is cast on the Speaker—that he will have, for instance, to be the arbiter of what Amendments are or are not to be discussed; and he spoke of the majority sheltering itself behind the authority of the Chair. To that I reply that it is not either the intention or probable effect of the Rule as it at present stands. I do not consider that the Speaker or the Chair will take upon itself, in ordinary cases, such a responsibility. The sole responsibility, in my judgment, which the Chair will take upon itself by allowing the Question to be put, will be, after a decision, whether it is one which it is proper for the opinion of the majority of the House to be consulted on. Under the present circumstances it is a far different responsibility which rests upon the Chair. It has to decide not only the “evident sense of the House,” but whether “there has been adequate debate” on the subject. It will be in the power of any Member to ask that the sense of the House should be taken on a given subject; it will be solely for the Chair to consider whether it is a question on which the sense of the House might properly be taken, and no responsibility such as now rests upon the Chair will in future rest upon it. No doubt, under the present Rule, if the House does not support the Speaker or Chairman, the effect of an adverse vote of the House of Commons, or even one that does not carry out his decision, will be disastrous upon the confidence the Speaker ought to enjoy; I believe it

will be totally different in the present case, and the Speaker will not incur any responsibility whatever. It is a fair question for argument whether it is necessary that any power, or any such protection to the minority, should be in the Rule at all. It is impossible to deny that there might be cases such as have been suggested, where the majority, excited—perhaps not unreasonably excited—by what it might consider unnecessary and too prolonged debate, might come down to the House determined to pass a measure through all its stages without allowing the minority further time for discussion and debate. I cannot say that, under such circumstances, the intervention of the Chair might not be salutary and useful. I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian that it would never be possible for the Chair to expose itself in permanent and habitual opposition to the declared will of the great majority of the House. But it is possible for the Chair to do what might occur under somewhat exceptional circumstances—to interpose its authority between the wish of an excited and perhaps, at the moment, intolerant majority and the execution of its wishes. I believe the vast majority of the House has now arrived at the conclusion that some practical form of applying the power of closure is required. There is a very large section, if not a majority, which is unwilling to entrust this power to a large majority, except with certain safeguards. I cannot say that I am convinced now, any more than my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian was convinced in 1882, that there is any necessity whatever for any such safeguards. Of the safeguards which have been suggested in the course of this debate, I see none which are less objectionable, or less liable to abuse, than that which has been suggested by the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman opposite; and although I myself do not attach so great importance to the necessity of safeguards as some may do, I believe this is a safeguard which we may attach to the working of this Rule without danger, without weakening respect to the Chair, or without in any serious degree increasing the responsibilities which are now borne by the Chair.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 275;
Noes 200: Majority 75.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Ambrose, W.
Anstruther, Colonel R.
H. L.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, G. S.
Baggallay, E.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Balfour, G. W.
Banes, Major G. E.
Baring, Viscount
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beadel, W. J.
Beckett, E. W.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W.
De la Poer
Bethell, Commander G.
R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St.
J. F.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burdett-Countts, W. L.
Ash.-B.
Burghey, Lord
Caine, W. S.
Caldwell, J.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon.
C. W. A. N.
Coghill, D. H.
Cohen, L. L.
Collings, J.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir
J. E.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Curzon, Viscount
Dalrymple, C.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawney, Colonel hon.
L. P.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M.
P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir
W. H.
Ebrington, Viscount
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, Sir G.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Evelyn, W. J.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Feilden, Lt-Gen. R. J.
Fergusson, right hon.
Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Finch, G. H.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitz-Wygram, General
Sir F. W.
Folkestone, right hon.
Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Gardner, R. Richard-
son-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon.
A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Gibson, J. G.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsworthy, Major-
General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.

Grotian, F. B.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon.
Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, General Sir
E. B.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hardcastle, E.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marq. of
Hastings, G. W.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H.
Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermion-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord
A. W.
Hobhouse, H.
Holland, rt. hon. Sir
H. T.
Holloway, G.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Hornby, W. H.
Houldsworth, W. H.
Howard, J. M.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes - Hallett, Col.
F. C.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
Knatchbull-Hugessen,
hon. H. T.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, I. C.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lea, T.
Lechmere, Sir E. A.
H.
Lewisham, right hon.
Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, J. W.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, rt. hon. J.
H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M^cCalmont, Captain J.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Manners, right hon.
Lord J. R.
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Matthews, rt. hon. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Adml. R. C.
Mildmay, F. B.
Mills, hon. C. W.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Pitt-Lewis, G.
Plunket, right hon.
D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Puleston, J. H.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, rt. hon. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robertson, W. T.
Robinson, B.
Ross, A. H.
Round, J.
Russell, T. W.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T.
M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Selater - Booth, right
hon. G.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin - Ibbetson, rt.
hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Captain C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M. J.
Sutherland, T.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.

Taylor, F.	White, J. B.
Temple, Sir R.	Whitley, E.
Thorburn, W.	Williams, J. Powell-
Tollemache, H. J.	Wilson, Sir S.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.	Wodehouse, E. R.
Tottenham, A. L.	Wolmer, Viscount
Townsend, F.	Wood, N.
Verdin, R.	Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Vernon, hon. G. R.	Wright, H. S.
Vincent, C. E. H.	Wroughton, P.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.	Yerburgh, R. A.
Waring, Colonel T.	Young, C. E. B.
Watson, J.	
Webster, Sir R. E.	TELLERS,
Webster, R. G.	Douglas, A. Akers-
Weymouth, Viscount	Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)	Ellis, J. E.
Abraham, W. (Lime-	Ellis, T. E.
rick, W.)	Esmonde, Sir T. H. G.
Acland, A. H. D.	Esslemont, P.
Acland, C. T. D.	Evershed, S.
Allison, R. A.	Fenwick, C.
Anderson, C. H.	Finucane, J.
Asquith, H. H.	Flower, C.
Atherley-Jones, L.	Flynn, J. C.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.	Foley, P. J.
Balfour, Sir G.	Foljambe, C. G. S.
Barbour, W. B.	Fowler, rt. hon. H. H.
Barran, J.	Fox, Dr. J. F.
Barry, J.	Fuller, G. P.
Biggar, J. G.	Gane, J. L.
Blake, J. A.	Gardner, H.
Blane, A.	Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Bolton, J. C.	Gilhooly, J.
Bolton, T. D.	Gill, H. J.
Bright, Jacob	Gill, T. P.
Bright, W. L.	Gourley, E. T.
Broadhurst, H.	Grey, Sir E.
Bruce, hon. R. P.	Grove, Sir T. F.
Bryce, J.	Gully, W. C.
Buxton, S. C.	Haldane, R. B.
Byrne, G. M.	Hanbury-Tracy, hon.
Cameron, C.	F. S. A.
Campbell, H.	Harcourt, rt. hon. Sir W.
Campbell-Bannerman,	G. V. V.
right hon. H.	Harrington, E.
Carew, J. L.	Harrington, T. C.
Chance, P. A.	Hayden, L. P.
Channing, F. A.	Hayne, C. Seale-
Childers, rt. hon. H.	Healy, T. M.
C. E.	Heneage, right hon. E.
Cobb, H. P.	Holden, I.
Cohen, A.	Hooper, J.
Coleridge, hon. B.	Howell, G.
Commins, A.	Hunter, W. A.
Connolly, L.	Illingworth, A.
Conway, M.	Jacoby, J. A.
Conybeare, C. A. V.	James, C. H.
Corbet, W. J.	James, hon. W. H.
Cossham, H.	Joicey, J.
Cox, J. R.	Jordan, J.
Cozens-Hardy, H. II.	Kay-Shuttleworth, rt.
Craig, J.	hon. Sir U. J.
Crawford, W.	Kennedy, E. J.
Cremer, W. R.	Kenny, C. S.
Crossley, E.	Kenny, M. J.
Dillon, J.	Labouchere, H.
Dillwyn, L. L.	Lane, W. J.
Dixon, G.	Leahy, J.
Duff, R. W.	Leake, R.

Lefevre, rt. hn. G. J. S.	Reed, Sir E. J.
Lockwood, F.	Rendel, S.
Macdonald, W. A.	Roberts, J.
MacInnes, M.	Roberts, J. B.
MacNeill, J. G. S.	Robertson, E.
M'Cartan, M.	Roe, T.
M'Carthy, J. H.	Roscoe, Sir H. E.
M'Donald, P.	Rowlands, J.
M'Ewan, W.	Rowlands, W. B.
M'Lagan, P.	Rowntree, J.
M'Laren, W. S. B.	Russell, Sir C.
Maitland, W. F.	Russell, E. R.
Mappin, Sir F. T.	Sexton, T.
Marum, E. M.	Shaw, T.
Mayne, T.	Sheehan, J. D.
Menzies, R. S.	Sheil, E.
Molloy, B. C.	Shirley, W. S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.	Smith, S.
Morgan, O. V.	Spencer, hon. C. R.
Morley, rt. hon. J.	Stack, J.
Mundella, rt. hn. A. J.	Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Neville, R.	Stansfeld, rt. hon. J.
Newnes, G.	Stepney - Cowell, Sir
Nolan, Colonel J. P.	A. K.
Nolan, J.	Stevenson, F. S.
O'Brien, J. F. X.	Stuart, J.
O'Brien, P.	Sullivan, D.
O'Brien, P. J.	Summers, W.
O'Connor, J. (Tippry.)	Sutherland, A.
O'Connor, T. P.	Swinburne, Sir J.
O'Doherty, J. E.	Tanner, C. K.
O'Hanlon, T.	Thomas, A.
O'Hea, P.	Tuite, J.
O'Kelly, J.	Vivian, Sir H. H.
Parker, C. S.	Wallace, R.
Parnell, C. S.	Wardle, H.
Paulton, J. M.	Warmington, C. M.
Pease, Sir J. W.	Watt, H.
Pease, A. E.	Wayman, T.
Pickersgill, E. H.	Whitbread, S.
Pieton, J. A.	Will, J. S.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir	Williams, A.
L.	Williamson, S.
Plowden, Sir W. C.	Wilson, H. J.
Portman, hon. E. B.	Winterbotham, A. B.
Powell, W. R. H.	Woodall, W.
Power, P. J.	Woodhead, J.
Price, T. P.	
Priestley, B.	TELLERS.
Pyne, J. D.	Marjoribanks, rt. hon.
Quinn, T.	E.
Rathbone, W.	Morley, A.
Redmond, J. E.	

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Speaker, I desire now to move to insert, after the word "minority," in line 5, the words "in respect of Debate, or otherwise." The House has affirmed the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) up to the word "minority;" it has, consequently, decided that it will have some limitation upon the power of the majority with respect to the application of the closure. That limitation, however, we regard as being of an entirely illusory character so far as we, the Irish Members, are concerned. Unlike the Tory Party, we have always been con-

sistent upon the question of Procedure. Ever since the first Closure Resolution was brought forward in 1882 we have maintained the same attitude upon this subject that we do to-night. As an example of that, I may remind the House that in 1882 we voted for a closure pure and simple, as opposed to a closure by a proportionate majority which the Tories desired to obtain. The policy of the Tory Party has been to have a closure by which they will be able to hit us, the Irish minority in the House, but under which it will be impossible for the Liberal Party to hit them. Our position is that, if one side is to be clôtured, the other side shall be clôtured. Since the House has decided that there shall be a limitation upon the power of the majority we now come to consider what is to be the nature of the limitation. Is it to be left vague and open, as proposed by the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith), or is it to be a real limitation? I propose that it shall be a real limitation, and that there shall be some direction given to the Chairman to guide him as to the interpretation to be placed upon the rights of minorities. The phrase "the rights of the minorities" is a new phrase—it is not a Parliamentary phrase, because it is unknown in the law and custom of Parliament. What do you mean by it? What minority do you mean? Do you mean only your own minority, or do you mean any minority and every minority? In your Amendment you speak of "the minority." Is that intended to exclude any minority but the Tory minority, when it next becomes a minority? Now, I propose to insert in this Amendment, as a guide for the Chair, "in respect of debate or otherwise;" and I wish to point out that there is not a word in the Resolution, so far as it has gone, which provides for any debate whatever. I do not mean to say for a moment that this is a complete definition, or a complete guide for the Chair; but, at least, it is my humble contribution towards the provision of a definition where a definition is badly wanted. Is it the intention of the Tory Party that this Resolution shall appear on the Journals of the House and become the law of Parliament in its present naked state? Will you refuse to insert the word "debate" in this Resolution? What will

your Parliament be without debate, without the power of debate? Unless some such Amendment as I propose be accepted, it will be in the power of the majority to choke and to prevent debate at a moment's notice. We have been exhorted to-night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) to rely upon public opinion. Possibly the two English Parties, in their dealings with each other, can rely upon public opinion. They are entitled to rely upon the public opinion of the country to which they belong, and of the country which they represent in this House. Possibly neither of the two English Parties will ever be guilty of gross want of fair play towards the other. Most probably you will have regard not only to the letter of the law which you are now passing, but to the unwritten law which regulates the contests between the English or British political Parties. But these are considerations upon which we are forbidden to rely. Hard-earned experience has taught us that we cannot rely upon the forbearance of any English political Party when its passions are aroused, and when it rushes blindly along like some wild beast, simply to destroy and trample everything in front of it. I have seen both of your political Parties in that rabid state, and I see no reason to suppose why one of them, at all events, may not be reduced to such a state again; in fact, I see the latent symptoms of hydrophobia approaching, which may in a little time develop, and give rise to an attack of rabies such as we have witnessed in times past. While we have still the power, it is necessary to attempt to guard ourselves against these periodical fits of lunacy. It may be more possible for us than it used to be to look to the public opinion of this country. I cannot admit for a moment that our position can ever be of a strength equal to that of an English political Party. The nature of the case forbids it; the fact that we come from another country, that we are the Representatives of Ireland, forbids it. Therefore it is I ask the House, while it is still in a calm mood, to accept the Amendment which I propose—an Amendment which is designed as an instruction to the Chair, and a definition of what the rights of minorities are. The first and foremost amongst those rights

is the right of debate. We do not desire, so long as we remain here, that we shall be silent—that our power of speech shall be under the control of any Leader of the House, or of any of his followers. The Resolution, as it stands, is naked and unadorned; it requires some dressing, some addition which will indicate to the Chair what the rights of the minority which it is its duty to protect are, so that we may be sure that, as a permanent minority—which we must be so long as we remain in this House; I hope our stay will not be of many years duration, I believe it will not—we shall have that protection in expressing the grievances of our country that the law of Parliament at present entitles us to.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, after the word “minority,” to insert the words “in respect of Debate, or otherwise.”—*(Mr. Parnell.)*

Question proposed, “That those words be inserted in the said proposed Amendment.”

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Mr. Speaker, the speech just delivered by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) was one that would have been more fitly addressed against the Amendment we have just decided, and for which the hon. Gentleman voted. The House has just decided that it will give the Chair a certain discretion to protect the rights of the minority, and I do not think the House is anxious to re-open the question. I will, however, point out that if the words of this Amendment have any meaning at all, I do not think they will greatly strengthen the Chair in defending the rights of the minority; and that if they are intended as a definition, they certainly constitute one of the vaguest definitions I have ever seen on paper. The rights of the minority “in respect of Debate, or otherwise,” seems to leave us in a state of great uncertainty as to what those rights are, and I cannot see that the Chair would be in any way assisted in arriving at a conclusion by the adoption of the present Amendment. What are the rights of the minority other than those contained in debate? The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell) did not condescend to explain to the House, or even to hint at, what are the additional and extraordinary rights which

he proposes to preserve for the minority over and above the privileges of fair debate. I do not see that the duty of the Chair would be rendered any clearer or easier if we were to adopt the words just moved. I hope the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell) will see that these words will not in any way carry out his desire—namely, the protection of the minority.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I think we have some reason to complain of the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes). He has condemned the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) on account of its vagueness and mistiness; but we have some reason to complain of the terms in which the right hon. Gentleman opposed the Amendment. I listened with great attention to the Postmaster General, because I had the satisfaction of sitting on the Committee upstairs with him, and I know nobody more anxious to maintain in that Committee the rights of the minority than the right hon. Gentleman. But he has now dealt with the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) in terms of such complete vagueness that I am really at a loss to know what it is exactly he has said. The hon. Member for Cork has put, in terms of great precision, the point he wishes to impress on the Committee; he proposes that the House should insert after the word “minority,” the words “in respect of Debate, or otherwise.” We have now arrived at the moment when the interposition of my hon. Friend, by this Amendment, is precisely required; because, in my judgment, we have now come to the crux of these Procedure Rules. The real question is this—Are you prepared, on the Motion, say of some hon. Member below the Gangway, “that the Question be put,” to apply the *clôture* without a single word having been said? We hear a great deal about Americanizing our Institutions; but, unless we adopt some such Amendment as this, we shall see the same thing happen as I have seen happen in the American Convention—we shall see the Speaker arranging with some hon. Member below the Gangway that he shall move the *clôture*—in America the Previous Question is moved, which is equivalent to the *clôture*. I do not suppose for one moment that the present Speaker will ever enter into an arrangement such as I have described; but in future

we may find 50 Members rising to address the House, and the Speaker calling upon A B—who may be the hon. Member for the Loughborough Division of Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle)—whom he knows will move the *clôture*, and, before one word is uttered upon the merits of the Question before the House, the *clôture* may be applied. Now, as I understand the proposal of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell), it is that no *clôture* shall take place until there has been some opportunity of debate upon the Question before the House. Does the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) really contemplate the application of the *clôture* upon a question on which there has been no debate at all?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and learned Gentleman is now referring to a question which has been already decided.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I am very sorry if I have transgressed in the slightest degree. As I understand the Amendment before the House, the Speaker is to have regard to the amount of debate that has taken place before he allows the *clôture* to be applied. If there is no provision of this kind an hon. Gentleman below the Gangway may start up suddenly, and, before a word has been uttered, move the *clôture*. Assuming the words of my hon. Friend to be surplusage, will the Postmaster General say what harm they can do? Unless you are careful, you will reduce the proceedings of the House to the level of the machine politics of America; you will have everything that is to take place secretly arranged, possibly the night before, between the Speaker and the Party in power.

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): Because I am anxious for the protection of the rights of the minority, I hope this Amendment will not be adopted. Any one who is accustomed to draw up documents giving rights knows that if particular definitions are added to general words the rights are practically limited. I object to a limitation of the rights of the minority by any words of definition. If we leave the Amendment as it is, the Speaker must necessarily have regard to the minority's right to discussion.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gedge) has entirely misrepresented the object of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell). The hon. Gentleman seems to think that

the object of the Amendment is to limit the rights of the minority. Certainly, that is not the intention of my hon. Friend. I was rather surprised at the reception the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Raikes) gave the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman and his Party take their stand on the last Division, on the ground that minorities are in need of some sort of protection from the tyranny of the majority. We accept that entirely. But then the right hon. Gentleman said my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) was inconsistent in proposing these words, because he had voted in favour of the Amendment which has just been decided. Surely the right hon. Gentleman entirely confounds the issue of the Amendment we voted upon. The question was not whether the rights of the minority should be protected from infringement, but whether the Chair should be brought in at all. The two questions are entirely distinct. My hon. Friend thinks that the interposition of the Chair is the way to degrade the position of the Speaker, and to degrade the position of the House of Commons; but he thinks, at the same time, that the rights of the minority should be protected. The right hon. Gentleman took objection to the Amendment on account of vagueness. He particularly objected to the words "or otherwise;" but surely he knows very well that no words are more familiar in legislation in general, and in our Procedure Rules, than the words "or otherwise." Surely my hon. Friend ought not to be blamed for using the words "or otherwise;" but rather praised for imitating the language of the Standing Rule. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General says the words relate to the course of debate; but surely the action of the Speaker relates to the course of debate also. If the House has decided that there need be no safeguard in the first stage of debate, *a fortiori* there ought to be one in the second stage. I submit that this reasoning is unanswerable, and that the right hon. Gentleman is bound to accept these words; and I trust I have said enough to show that there is a great deal more in the words of my hon. Friend than the right hon. Gentleman supposes.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in an impatient speech answered the ques-

[*Eighth Night.*]

tion as to what is a minority; but he abstained from saying one word as to what are the rights of a majority. I will venture, Mr. Speaker, to say that if you were called upon to rise and define the rights of a minority that you could not do it. And I will go further and say that if hon. Gentlemen opposite were called upon to write down their ideas of those rights that not more than two or three of them would be in agreement. The Government have placed in you great powers, but they have done it in so vague a manner that we cannot understand what they are. There is something hidden in the mind of the Government which, although I have listened attentively to their explanations, I have not been able to discover. If it is clear to the Government what are the rights of minorities, why, I ask, do they object to insert the words proposed by my hon. Friend, which I cordially support?

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Sir, I am quite as anxious as the hon. Member for Cork or any other Member of this House to safeguard the rights of minorities, and I will go further and say that if I could see that the words in the Amendment before the House would be likely to have that effect I would support them at once. But I can only come to the conclusion that the words proposed would be entirely superfluous in that they would add nothing whatever to the safeguards which already exist. I trust, therefore, the hon. Member will not press the Amendment to a Division.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 107; Noes 226; Majority 119.—(Div. List, No. 42.)

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg, Sir, to move the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Not until I have again put the Question.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): With great respect to you, Sir, I submit that it will be better that the Question should not be put, but that the hon. Member for Northampton should be allowed to move the adjournment of the debate, so that Amendments may be moved.

MR. SPEAKER: There would be nothing before the House if I did not put the Question. The hon. Member for

Northampton will not be in a worse position through my putting it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I wish to ask you, Sir, whether, if you put the Question now, it would be open for hon. Gentlemen to move an Amendment to that Question?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes; subsequent to the Amendment just decided by the House—after the word “minority.”

Question again proposed.

“That the words ‘A Member rising in his place may claim to move, ‘That the Question be now put,’ and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, ‘That the Question be now put,’ shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate’ be there inserted.”—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate. We are discussing Rules of Debate, one of which is that we should not sit after half-past 12 o'clock. Under the circumstances I do not think it is unreasonable that we should adjourn this Vote at half-past 1 o'clock.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Debate be now adjourned.”—(Mr. Labouchere.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Does the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury propose to move, when the first Resolution is passed, that it be a Standing Order of the House?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have always said, and I now repeat it, that when the Rule is passed it will immediately become operative.

MR. T. M. HEALY: That is not the point.

MR. PARNELL: In that case it would only be a Sessional Order. Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to make a Motion that it shall be a Standing Order of the House?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I shall follow the precedents in that case.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Tuesday next.

MOTIONS.

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Select Committee be appointed to reconsider the plans and proposals for an

Admiralty and War Office:—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may with advantage be retained.”—*(Mr. Plunket.)*

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what it is proposed that this Committee shall do?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): A Committee was appointed last year, to reconsider the plans for the proposed public offices. This Committee will undertake a similar inquiry, and will be charged specially to report whether some of the existing Admiralty buildings cannot be retained.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the Committee consider the question of the approach from Charing Cross?

MR. PLUNKET: Yes; the Committee will consider that question.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): How many will be put on the Committee?

MR. PLUNKET: Sixteen or seventeen, I do not know which.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I suppose all parties in the House will be represented?

MR. PLUNKET: Yes.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER OF SUPPLY.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Does the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury propose to take other classes of Supply on Monday, beyond those on the Paper?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): We shall only take those on the Paper.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): May I ask whether Her Majesty's Government have received any information to-night with regard to the rising in Bulgaria?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have received news of the entire suppression of the risings in Bulgaria. These were confined to a small portion of the troops at Silistria and Rustchuk, and appear to have been prompted by emissaries of the refugees. They were speedily suppressed, and at Rustchuk the loyal troops were ardently supported by the

populace. No disturbances have occurred elsewhere.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Is it true, as is stated in the evening papers, that Germany has instigated these risings?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I have not even heard of the report, and I do not suppose that there is the slightest foundation for it.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION ACT (1876)

AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thorburn, Bill to amend “The Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876,” ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thorburn, Mr. Arthur Elliot and Mr. Laing Brown.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 188.]

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Two o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 7th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*Second Reading*—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) * (29); Local Government (Ireland) (Carrick-on-Suir) * (30).

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

QUESTION.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY asked the Lord Privy Seal, When the Report of the Commissioners on the Belfast Riots would be published?

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (EARL CADOGAN), in reply, said, that the Report of the Commission had not yet been presented to either House of Parliament, by reason that the Report, as at present received, was incomplete, inasmuch as one of the Commissioners (MR. M'HARDY) had dissented from the others, and made a separate Report. It had been hoped that, by a short delay, the Report might be presented in a complete form, with MR. M'HARDY's supplementary Report. As the latter had not, however, been received, the Report of the other Commissioners would be presented in its present state, and would be laid upon the Table in the course of a few days.

GLEBE LANDS BILL.—QUESTION.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, that he had received Her Majesty's Commands to attend at Windsor

on Tuesday next, with the Convocation of the Diocese of Canterbury, to present their Address. He begged, therefore, to ask the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India, if he would agree to the postponement of the Glebe Lands Bill till Thursday?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount Cross), in reply, said, that he had no objection to the postponement of the Bill till Thursday next.

HORSE BREEDING AND SUPPLY FOR MILITARY AND INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.—OBSERVATIONS.

LORD RIBBLESDALE, in rising to call attention to the state of horse breeding and horse supply for military and industrial purposes in this country, said, he was not going to raise the question of the breeding of such an implement of wealth as the race-horse. In days when £10,000 were offered in one prize these animals could take care of themselves. Moreover, he could congratulate the noble Duke (the Duke of Westminster) on having bred Ormonde—the horse of a century; while Hermit had been a gold mine to his fortunate owner, and to the equally fortunate purchasers of his stock. Nor was he going to raise the question of Government breeding studs, as tried and abandoned abroad and as tried by ourselves in India. The conclusions of the Committee on Government Stud in India declared that they had failed to produce any improvement in the breed of horses; that Government interference in horse breeding had completely paralyzed private enterprise; and that the cost of the horses amounted to either £148 or £219 each, according to the different modes of debiting expenditure to the Department. Moreover, the best horses were not bred in great studs, but on small private farms. The subject of horse supply had always proved interesting to both Houses of Parliament. In 1873 Lord Rosebery's Commission was the result of a discussion in their Lordships' House. In 1875 Lord Calthorpe made an admirable proposal. Lord Alington instructed and entertained the House of Commons on this subject in a manner which had never been forgotten. Mr. Chaplin made a speech and a proposal to which he would have to refer later. In their fondness for horses both Parties in that House were, he thought, agreed. The

noble Earl the Leader of the Liberal Party (Earl Granville) had proved over and over again that horsemanship could take the greatest liberties with the biggest country; and he knew he could congratulate the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) on the recent acquisition of an excellent brown mare which must, on no account, be lost sight of. That night, however, they must lay aside all cherished prepossessions of blood and action and consider the noble animal as a locomotive and traction machine which a country with great industrial requirements and great public service responsibilities must have at command. They must not be horse lovers, but an Assembly of economic precision, considering an economic problem. The perishing horse supply and decay of horse breeding in this country might be generally stated as an example of "the failure of production through relaxation of motives." What they had to consider was, whether the relaxed motives could be braced into new action and vigour. Much might be done in that direction, and he thought the present moment was very favourable for a review of the question. Much good work had been done by public societies and by public-spirited individuals. English breeders had not lost heart and spirit; on the contrary, there were signs of renewing vitality and enterprise. Clydesdale and shire breeding was in a most prosperous condition, and there was no doubt that this country could still breed the best horses in the world. Let them look at the foreign demand for English horses, and at the fact that astute middlemen were always on the look-out in the foreign dealers' yards to purchase English-looking horses to be sent into the English market. But as long as we heard on all sides of the scarcity of really nice half-bred horses, as long as our imports meant an average loss of £250,000 to the home producer, as long as it was almost impossible to buy half-a-dozen matched pairs of English harness horses, we had abundant evidence that not only were we not breeding high-class horses up to the demand, but that we consequently had no surplus of native-born animals available for commercial requirements which were multiplying daily. Many reasons could be given for this scarcity, some of which he would

touch upon later on; but he thought the time had come when we must try to deal with facts, instead of re-investigating sufficiently obvious causes. To see any source of wealth and credit in a country drying up through the diminished energy or discouragement of the industry which tapped the source was disquieting enough in itself. But this was not only a question of national wealth and credit. The creeping paralysis which during the last 35 years had been encroaching upon our horse-producing industry might bring us at any moment face to face with very possible and very critical emergencies. At any moment we might wish to move, and not only find that we had lost the power to move, but that we had distributed that power to others. There was such a contingency as a European war. A widely-accepted principle of modern war was the rapid mobilization of all arms. Could we calculate on our own country being able to furnish us with horses? He feared not. Even in peace time the number of horses fell even below commercial requirements. He would give the figures of the gradual increase of our imports. From 1863 to 1872 the imports were 79,131, and from 1873 to 1882, 197,092, representing a loss to this country, at the rate of £35 a-head, of nearly £6,000,000. For the five years from 1882 to 1886 our imports had been 57,432; in 1885 the imports even into Ireland amounted to 2,487. The consequence was a great difficulty in finding horses when we wanted them. As Colonel Ravenhill said in a public lecture at the United Service Institution last June on the reserve of horses—"We are at our wits' ends to find horses on sudden demand." Colonel Ravenhill spoke from experience. In 1873 Sir Henry Storks had to purchase 2,028 transport horses, and had the greatest difficulty in doing so, 1,500 of them having to be purchased in France. In 1878 great exertions produced 2,250 in four weeks. In 1882 it took 17 weeks to collect 1,700. On reference to the latest War Office Returns the number of horses required to complete the establishment of two Army Corps was 22,966. The number of horses in the possession of the Government for the financial year 1886 was 12,951. Deducting from this number 20 per cent as too young, too old, or sick and lame, there remained a total effective of 10,371 horses, or about

1,100 under the number required for one Army Corps, and 12,600 under the number required for two Army Corps. Where lines of communication had to be maintained, 2,773 additional horses were required for each Army Corps, making a total deficiency of 18,100; and, in addition, there should be a reserve to feed the waste of one campaign of 40 or 50 per cent, or, say, 9,000 horses. In the Crimea our waste amounted to 80 per cent per annum. That gives a total deficiency, in case of war, of 27,000 horses. The latest Census Returns showed a total of horses in Great Britain and Ireland of 3,000,000, 2,000,000 of which were employed in agriculture, and 1,000,000 privately or in trade. After obvious deductions for age, size, unsoundness, or other reasons, there would only be about 70,000 horses available. Now, if Colonel Ravenhill's figures were correct—and, if anything, they were under-stated—mobilization seemed an insoluble problem; and it appeared certain that without an Act of Parliament for compulsory acquisition we could not get horses for even the initial purposes of war. Any reliable supply of horses for the purposes of war meant a constant surplus on hand far above the commercial requirements of this country. His (Lord Ribblesdale's) figures had given their Lordships some idea of that surplus, and the maintenance of any such surplus was obviously impossible. As some stress was laid on Government demand in emergency being an incentive to breeding, it was as well to point out that an irregular demand, such as the Government would have to make on the outbreak of war, could never lead to the wider breeding of horses. Nobody in his senses would breed for a casual demand which might never occur. But granted our inability to meet the want, "unless," as Sir Frederick Fitzwygram said, "you stop the traffic in Regent Street, and single out the appropriate horses as they pass," and granted that for your reserve you must develop channels in our Colonies as yet undeveloped, surely we should be capable of producing native-born animals enough to meet the private and commercial demand of this country in time of peace? The question was, could we, by encouraging the breeding of good half-bred horses, by pushing on the good work which had been done in this

direction, supply our own ordinary needs? He thought so, and for this reason. Lord Cathcart, in his valuable paper in *The Agricultural Journal*, pointed out this fact—

“No care or skill will enable the breeder of hunters to reach the highest aim with more than a fair proportion. The average horses must pay expenses, but weight-carrying hunters should be the type or model; the misfit hunters are valuable for most purposes.”

Now, by encouraging the breeding of half-bred horses in such sufficient numbers as to create a surplus of misfits ample enough to supply the general purposes of the demand of the public, we should gain three points of vantage—first, a comparative security from the risk of absolute horse famine; secondly, the certainty of a floating horse population of good English blood; and, thirdly, the recovery of an average annual sum of £250,000 at present being lost to the home producers. Closely allied with this question of supply was the question of export. A question as to stopping the exporting of horses was recently asked in “another place.”

Now, except as an *ultima ratio*, stopping our export was a soul-destroying error. We had nothing to fear from large export figures; everything to fear from large import figures. An increase in export obviously meant increasing production, but it also meant the *pari passu* independence of foreign supplies. Thus the figures of the last few years, where they showed a large export, gave a weaker import. Take 1885, when the export was 6,196, the import 13,023. In 1886 the export was 7,323, the import was only 11,027. That is, setting aside draught and thoroughbred stock, an increased export meant a proportionate increase of misfits or average animals available for the general purposes of the public. Beyond this, the larger our export trade the greater was our reserve to fall back upon, as on an emergency export would be stopped, and all the animals bred for export would become available in their degree, *plus* the misfits or average animals bred for export and missing the market. Now, objections to the export of mares was much more intelligible. The general complaint was that there were no mares in the country. Mr. Tattersall stated recently, on the high authority of Mr. Phillips, that during the last 20 years 1,000 mares had been exported annually.

The late Mr. Wellfit, in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, exported large numbers of mares, and the first point selected by Lord Rosebery's Committee to account for the deficiency of native-born horses was this large export of mares. There was no doubt that foreigners would buy any fresh whole-coloured animal if sound and well-bred enough. But this was a difficulty which would right itself if once the mare, as a brood mare, regained the special value in England which she had lost. Our difficulty would not so much be mares as sound mares. In Ireland they kept their mares, and what made him think so was the fewness of mares in hunting consumers' stables. In the Oakley hunt there were 45 geldings to six mares; Fitzwilliam, 41 geldings to two mares; Badsworth, 60 geldings to seven mares; Goodwood, 42 geldings to six mares. Moreover, in 1873, Mr. Phillips, the Army contractor, stated before the Lords' Committee that the Cavalry were largely mounted on mares. It was the same now, and there was no doubt that for general purposes mares could be bought in this country 20 per cent cheaper than geldings. Still, all this would right itself if breeding gave mares back their specific value. Any proposal to tax brood mare export was, he thought, impossible. He would quote Mr. Jacob Wilson on the subject. Speaking at the Farmers' Club in 1885, he said—

“It is impossible for the moment to think that you can impose any tax or fiscal embargo against the exportation of mares. Foreigners have a double motive in buying our mares. They require them first for their cavalry and artillery, and afterwards for breeding, so that it is impossible, in the present condition of agriculture, for the tenant farmer of England to compete with the foreign buyer or to refuse the temptation of a high price for his mares.”

Many reasons might be given for the disfavour into which breeding had fallen in this country. Country gentlemen lived less at home. Breeding of all kinds was one of the contrivances which used to make country life enjoyable and complete, and the occupiers of the land took colour from the squires. But the multiplication and the facility for amusements in all kinds of directions had knocked on the head stay-at-home pursuits which were half pleasure and half business—breeding among others. He had letters from various parts of the country attesting the pining away of

what used to be a favourite and flourishing industry. In Leicestershire the prices of stock had ruined farmers, in Lincolnshire the prices of wheat. In the Fylde, a great district for harness and hackney horses, there was hardly a good horse of the kind to be got—they had taken to breed draught horses as giving quicker returns. In Craven, a pastoral district in Yorkshire, where he lived, in old days they had a celebrated strain known as Craven blacks, which had now entirely disappeared. The large graziers who used active hacks in the old days now got into a third-class carriage, and small farmers no longer ploughed a patch for the oatmeal—which was the staple food of this district—owing to the cheapness of wheat flour. Consequently they had no use for the active mare they used to keep for this purpose and for riding to fairs on. On May 30, 1882, Mr. Lumley Hodgson, writing to Lord Cathcart, said—

“Improvement has brought much undrained land into cultivation, and fitted it for sheep, where previously horses and cattle only were bred. Dickenson, the jobmaster, used to say that in Yorkshire the sheep had eaten the horse; on many small holdings now consolidated small farmers worked useful mares and bred valuable foals. Influenza has a discouraging effect. It came with the potato disease and food-and-mouth in 1845, and had been more or less prevalent ever since, causing horses to go roarers. I never had a roarer before and have never been without one since.”

But what looked like the conclusion of the whole matter was the fact that breeding half-bred horses for some time back had not paid. The question they had to consider was whether the causes which had made breeding unpopular and unprofitable, and which had indicated a better employment of capital, obtained now? The demand for good horses had certainly not lessened, but it was dislocated and distracted by steam. Farmers and breeders had got puzzled, but with proper remedies he thought there was every prospect of the revival of a great British industry. At the same time, unless those proper remedies were quickly applied, he would personally rather hunt on a Flanders mare than advise the farmers to take again to extensive breeding. But he asserted that the causes which led to the abandonment of breeding did not obtain now. If their Lordships turned to the Report of Lord Rosebery's Commission in 1873 they would find

that the second reason by which the Commission accounted for the deficient supply of horses was the increased profits of sheep and cattle, which, being more certain and more rapidly realized, were doubly attractive to the farmer as compared with those obtained by the breeding of horses. But those were profits of the past. If, as Mr. Dickenson said, the sheep and cattle had eaten up the horses, they, in their turn, had been devoured by American beef and Australian mutton. Foreign competition and the depreciation of silver had ruined tillage farming. Large tracts had been laid down or were being laid down of grass and had gone out of cultivation, and this was favourable to breeding. Moreover, the agricultural pendulum was in a state of painful arrest. Farmers were considering whether to turn to the production of jam or poultry or vegetables, and the least push would send the pendulum swinging in any direction which seemed to promise anything like a livelihood and a decent profit. Could such a push be given, he would ask, without interference with the liberty of the subject and the pocket of the taxpayer? He had spoken of mares; but if the prospects of breeding were to be considered they would have to reckon with stallions and demand. They had two difficulties confronting them. First, they must provide facilities for the successful and profitable breeding of high class half-bred horses; secondly, they had to induce breeders to avail themselves of such facilities. In order to meet the first difficulty they obviously must find stallions. Could the stallions be provided without State aid, or were there any stallions available in the country? In both cases his answer was “No.” In the first case, of late years the Governments of Hungary, Austria, Italy, France, and Germany had scoured this country and purchased with excellent judgment, and, what was still more valuable, with unlimited purse and commissions to miss nothing, our finest country sires. With the prices they had given and were prepared to give it was idle to talk of private enterprise competing. As to whether valuable stallions were in this country he said “No,” because not only had such horses as Ambergris, Ostregor, and Gunnersbury been leaving the country, but the residuum was worthless, as was brought

out in evidence before the Rosebery Commission, the enormous percentage of unsound travelling stallions being adduced by 20 out of the 27 witnesses examined. How was this first facility then to be provided? He unhesitatingly answered by public money. He felt certain that a shudder would pass along the Front Bench when he said this, but it was nothing new. The Queen's Plate money was public money, and the State Establishment at Hampton Court was indirectly public money. Was the Queen's Plate money wisely disposed of at present, and was it necessary in these days of enormously increased racing prizes? If its original purpose were regarded—that was, to encourage the breed of horses—surely no better use could be devised in closer observance of the spirit and letter of its constitution than by devoting this annual grant to encouraging good country sires in this country, and, if possible, thereby forestalling the foreigner. He would recall to their Lordships Mr. Chaplin's admirable proposal. He proposed the purchase by the Government of three or four thoroughbred horses as opportunity and prices permitted to be let annually by auction as country sires to the highest bidder, who would be limited by conditions as to fee. The Queen's Plate money would be ample for this purpose, and in 10 years would probably place the country in the possession of a very magnificent stud. No loss need accrue, for Lord Glasgow's stud, which was left under peculiar conditions of not leaving the country, were leased in this way at prices which paid most handsomely—£700 being paid in one case for the annual services of one stallion. Could not such a stud with advantage be located at Hampton Court, where all the machinery was already set up, and would not such a boon to horse breeding be incalculable as compared with the very risky and unsatisfactory breeding operations carried on there at present? He felt certain that Colonel Maude—than whom there was no better judge of such matters—would hail such an opportunity of benefiting the community. Of course the scheme sketched might be objected to as being too complex. In that case he would suggest that the Queen's Plate money should be devoted to subsidize stallions serving in the country at low fees, and the money

should be apportioned, and its distribution left to the Royal Agricultural, the Hibernian, the Caledonian, the Hunters Improvement, and other kindred societies, to be given away in premiums for good stallions, provided they came up to a certain standard, of course, and were sound, and available in fixed districts during the ensuing season. Another great inducement to breeding would be large prizes of Government money, to foals, yearlings, and two-year-olds, at all produce shows, the younger the stock the better, for a quick return was a great inducement to breeders or, indeed, to any investors of capital; but in either of these cases the object must have the Queen's Plate money. Another scheme was the purchase of two-year-olds by Government direct in districts which command the services of first-rate sires, to be kept at maturing depôts until draughted into the service. The system of purchasing direct from the breeder to the exclusion of the middleman was approved of by the French Inspector General of Remounts, and by Baron Nathusius, in an interesting letter to Mr. Gilbey on this subject. The advantages to the Government would be, securing the pick of the market by being able to buy without foreign competition and at buyers' prices, and the certainty that young stock were well "done" before they were draughted into the Cavalry and Artillery Services. Modern warfare had added very much to the duties of Cavalry, requiring mobility, and bringing out the value of bone and blood. In these days Cavalry had to push many miles ahead as the screen of an advancing Army, and a Cavalry horse could hardly be too good an animal. As for the advantages to the breeder of Government purchase of two-year-olds, he would have a quick return and a more or less guaranteed demand. Provided the animal was good enough, he would be able to dispose of stock quick, and so make room for what was coming on. Moreover, the plan would encourage breeding by small farmers, whose places were not adapted for keeping horses on after three years of age, for after that age a high-couraged colt might be said to be always in mischief. Of course, there was the question of expense of starting, and of the rent of maturing farms, which would have to be leased. There was also the question of altering the present remount system, for there would

have to be substituted a Government purchaser, who would advertise his visits in districts where he felt certain of finding good two-year-old stock. But the question of expense was not by any means formidable; and, at all events, the value of such an experiment could hardly be over-stated. The War Office was aware of the importance of the question as it affected their Department. Government buyers had gone to Canada with instructions to bring back samples of what could be bought in that country. There were also rumours of a constructed scheme for colonizing horses—in Jamaica, of all ineligible islands. He trusted that no Government would devote public money to any such enterprize without very considerable circumspection. In Jamaica we should, indeed, be walking by faith, and not by sight. But this was no question for the War Office. It was a question for Her Majesty's Government, as a responsible Body—a Body responsible to the people of this country, because in this country a part of our national wealth and credit were in danger of perishing, not so much by mere consumption as by relaxing enterprize at home and increasing enterprize abroad. He had tried to lay the case before the House unadorned; and he yielded allegiance to the principle of supply and demand, which he recognized as sovereign. He did not dispute that the whole question was a question of supply and demand; but it was also a struggle between England's private and weakened enterprize, and the pertinacity and purchasing power of Foreign Governments. It was State purchase, not individual purchase, which had taken the best blood out of this country. No doubt the principle of supply and demand must never be lost sight of, or offended against; but if we were to revive a national wealth-producing industry, which was hastening to decay, we must keep our best blood at home, and to outbid the foreign purchasing power we must use the same means—pounds, shillings, and pence.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (LORD HARRIS) said, their Lordships must feel grateful to the noble Lord opposite (Lord Ribblesdale) for initiating a discussion upon a subject of interest to all Englishmen, and one of undoubted importance to the country from many points

of view; but, in the presence of so many noble Lords who had made the breeding of horses their amusement and their business, he (Lord Harris) feared he should not be able to enter into the economical questions raised by the noble Lord. He, therefore, rose for the purpose of dealing shortly with that part of the question which had reference to the supply of horses for military purposes. He understood, so far as he could make out, that the suggestion made was, that the Military Authorities, instead of buying remounts of four years and three and a-half years old, should purchase two-year-olds. Their Lordships must not run away with the idea that the figures quoted in the first part of the noble Lord's speech as to the number of horses that might be required in the localization of two Army Corps accurately indicated the number that would be required by the Government for the ordinary supply of the Army, for the number required annually would be far less. The demand for two-year-olds would be only for the number required for remounts; and that demand would be only slightly in excess of the demand for horses which existed now. The noble Lord said that there was a slow demand for two-year-olds, and that for four-year-olds we came into competition with foreign Governments, and they, being more liberal, got the better horses. He (Lord Harris) quite understood the suggestion that if we bought two-year-olds we should be likely to get better horses; but, unless convincing arguments were adduced, he could not accept the idea to buy two-year-olds and keep them for two years would be as economical as the present plan of buying four-year-olds. It was evident that, in keeping the horses for the two years, the Government would run the risk, which was run by every breeder, of the care and maturing of the horses up to an age at which they were now purchased; and he thought the result would be that when a horse came into a regiment he would be a more expensive animal than he was at present. He would not object to that in the least if we got a better horse for the money. Of course, more would have to be heard about the details of the scheme, and he did not understand that the noble Lord had gone deeply into them. He would only reply in gene-

ral that the Government, so far as the supply of horses for military purposes was concerned, had an open mind on the question, and that they recognized that it would be far more advantageous for military purposes to be able to rely upon a supply of horses in this country, upon which they could at any time lay their hands, than to have to go out of the country for them. While the Government had an open mind on this question, they were perfectly prepared to have any scheme that was carefully thought out submitted to them, and they would give it every care and consideration. Alluding to the economic part of the question, it must come to this—that they must give an enhanced price for horses, because there was undoubtedly, at that moment, very much better encouragement given by foreign countries for horses for military purposes than was given by the English Government. He had just had a conversation with a gentleman who had spent much of his time in France, and who was largely interested in horse breeding in that country, together with the supply of mules all over the world; and he had told him (Lord Harris) that, as a general rule, in the cavalry stables there—and he had taken every opportunity possible of visiting them—the price the horse cost was marked up over the stall, together with the name of the place where it came from. In four-fifths of the stables he had visited, as a general rule, this gentleman went so far as to say that he found that the prices had averaged 1,500 francs or £60; while a very large proportion of the horses came from England. For the class of horses we wanted for military purposes the French Government were thus, it seemed, prepared to give 20 per cent more than we were. If they were to compete with the French Government in that particular direction, they must raise their price £20 a-horse, and that was an economic question with which he was not able to deal. Another direction in which, without incurring any great expense, the breeding of horses might be encouraged, was through the medium of that much decried but admirable and useful body, the Yeomanry. At the present time, as he understood the matter, what the farmers required was a market for horses for military purposes; and if they could depend upon a Government

official or Cavalry officer attending each Yeomanry training place once a-year, ready to purchase suitable animals on the spot, he believed that, in the course of a few years, a good supply would by this means be forthcoming. At all events, that would be a very inexpensive mode of proceeding, and would be attended with good results. The question would probably be brought under the notice of the illustrious Duke (the Duke of Cambridge); and if what he had suggested could be carried out, and the effect was to produce the kind of horses which were wanted, he believed that their object would be attained economically and beneficially to all parties. In conclusion, he would only repeat that the War Office Authorities were perfectly prepared to receive any scheme which the noble Lord, or anyone else, might submit to them; and he could assure their Lordships that it would receive the utmost consideration.

THE FIELD MARSHAL COMMANDING IN CHIEF (The Duke of Cambridge): My Lords, I think it is a great advantage to the Service that the noble Lord (Lord Ribblesdale) has brought forward this subject to-night. As to the difficulties we have to contend with in obtaining horses, they are very great—indeed, much greater than they used to be; and I suppose we must, to a certain extent, attribute them to the farmer not being in a position to breed so many horses as formerly. In times past, no doubt, there were greater facilities; but now we find great difficulties, added to which we have to contend with foreign competition, which doubtless has as much to do with it as anything else. What has fallen from the noble Lord is quite true. The foreigner gives a larger and a better price than we do, and horses command a larger price in foreign countries; and therefore horses go, as a matter of course, where a better price is given. To deal, however, with that question is a matter which no Government would willingly adopt, and which requires great consideration; for if you raise the price you will not be able to lower it again, and any Government will dislike that. There is great force in what has been said about two and three year-olds, and I have always been of opinion that we can get much better animals at from two to three years old than at four years old. We buy, and are obliged to

purchase horses at three years old, which stand on our Estimates as serviceable troopers. The result is that we have a large number of animals in the Service which are not reliable horses. During the time I have been at the head of the Army we have endeavoured to get four or five-year-old animals; but the difficulty has been very great, and, what is worse, we have got an inferior class of horse. If you go into the markets you would get a better three-year-old than a four or five-year-old. It is the interregnum between the ages that you want to get over; and I think there is great force in the arguments of the noble Lord in favour of buying two or three-year-olds. I think, economically, it would be better if you bought two or three-year-olds, and had large tracts of grass land where you could turn these horses out until they were ready for use—that is, until they were four years old. I believe that is the system adopted in the Austrian Service and elsewhere. These horses are not bred by the Government, but are reared by them. It would be most undesirable to have a breeding establishment; but I do think it desirable that you should keep horses from two to two and a-half years old until they are fit to be put into the ranks. By this means you would get a better class of horse, while the number of horses for breeding purposes would increase. We got some very good horses from Hungary; some went out to South Africa and some to Egypt; but, at this moment, every country has stopped the exportation of horses, although we are not at war; and, therefore, to rely upon foreign countries is relying upon a broken reed. The more you can encourage the breeding of horses in this country the better; but it is a good thing to keep the price down if you can. When an emergency occurs we shall have to give a high price for very inferior animals, and we shall not be able to find them except under compulsion, which is a system which will be most inconvenient and most undesirable. If we cannot buy the horses in this country we must look somewhere else, and it will be much better to look to our own Colonies than to foreign countries. Canada in this respect may be of some use; but Canada is a long way off. We bought some ranche horses this year; but we cannot rely upon the supply when we want them;

and in any sudden mobilization there will be other difficulties, because for field service we shall want seasoned animals. It is most essential, therefore, for all purposes that the breed of horses should be encouraged, for English horses are the best in the world, and more encouragement to the farmer would be beneficial not only from a military point of view, but for the general public. In case of mobilization there would be an immense difficulty, and I agree with the noble Lord (Lord Harris) that the Yeomanry should be in some way utilized, if possible, although I do not quite see my way to that. I have found that Yeomanry horses are either too valuable, or not sufficiently well-bred to be of use for the Public Service; but if such a system could be of the slightest use to encourage the Yeomanry, who, moreover, require encouragement, as it is a most useful Force, and a Force which, I believe, would be very efficient on an emergency—I certainly should favour it. But I should like to see some definite proposals put forward, as it is very difficult to see how some of the very valuable statistics and suggestions put forward bear upon the subject. I believe that this useful and interesting discussion may produce among those who take an interest in the matter, either on the part of the Government or private individuals, some scheme which may be carefully considered; and as far as the Military Authorities are concerned, I hope it will produce some very valuable results.

LORD WENLOCK said they heard a great deal about Canada and elsewhere; but he thought that every encouragement should be extended to the farmer in this matter, and he complained that in his own county of Yorkshire, they never heard of the Government contractors inquiring for horses, although he believed that large numbers of useful horses might be purchased at the Government prices. He should like to see the system under which horses were supplied for the Government altered. A great number of Cavalry and Artillery officers were now retired from active service at a comparatively early age, and if some of them were established in different parts of the country, they might make it known to the farmers of the various districts that the Government would buy horses directly from them. In that way, the Government would get

the horses it required and the farmers would be benefited, because, at present the great blot was that horses were purchased through contractors who desired to make some £10 per head profit, and in that way they made a great deal of money which might be given to the producer of the raw material, the farmer, who was annually losing a large sum which would go a great way towards encouraging the breeding of horses. In that connection those agents always offered much less than the Government limit, and therefore often failed to secure the best horses as against the foreigners. He regretted that the noble Lord (Lord Harris) had made reference to the ridiculous sum voted in the interests of the turf; because it was absurd to suppose that the turf required such small assistance in the way of Queen's Plates. He made an exception in the case of Ireland, where the turf was in a very low state, and where the Plates might be of some use; but in this country Queen's Plates were unnecessary. With respect to the exportation of mares, he thought it should be entirely prohibited. The foreign market was entirely closed against our buying; and, on the other hand, foreigners were busy buying as many mares in this country as possible. It might appear to be a shame that our farmer should not be allowed to export his animals; but it should be remembered that to sell them to the foreigner was like killing the goose that laid the golden egg; for it was a short-sighted policy to get rid of the mares on which they must rely for the production of horses. With regard to obtaining sound stallions, he thought it would be of advantage if it were made impossible to recover by law any fees for the use of a stallion which had not a proper certificate for the year. In conclusion, he was very grateful to his noble Friend (Lord Ribblesdale) for the manner in which he had brought forward that important question.

LORD RIBBLESDALE, in reply, said, he had suggested the scheme for two-year-olds as a kind of guarantee for the English breeder. He could not help saying that the noble Lord the Under Secretary of State for War had not touched some of the important points to which he had adverted. It was not, however, his (Lord Ribblesdale's) intention to allow the matter to drop.

Lord Wenlock

After Easter he would bring forward, as the illustrious Duke had suggested, a detailed and constructive scheme on the question. He could assure noble Lords it would not be evolved from his own consciousness, for he had been in communication with all those who knew most about the subject and were most interested in it, and he had taken the best advice.

LORD HARRIS said, he was unable, as Under Secretary of State for the War Department, to say more than he had already said. Some of the points to which the noble Lord (Lord Ribblesdale) had referred, and especially that respecting the Queen's Plates, was a question which more concerned either the Master of the Horse or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At any rate, the War Office had nothing to do with it.

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 7th March, 1887.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — Town Holdings, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Thomas Ellis, Mr. Heath, Mr. Knowles, and Mr. James Rowlands *added*.

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7); CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Votes 2 and 13; CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES, Votes 1, 3, and 5; CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES, Votes 1 and 4; CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS; REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, Votes III. and V.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolution in Committee*—County Courts [Expenses].

Ordered—First Reading—Parliamentary Elections (Seamen's Vote) * [190].

Second Reading—Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) * [153], *debate adjourned*.

Select Committees—Foynes Harbour * [159]; Admiral Mayne, Mr. Smith-Barry, Mr. Schwann, and Mr. Matthew Kenny *added*; Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) * [135]; Mr. Henry H. Fowler and Mr. David Plunket *added*.

Committee—Report—First Offenders * [132-189].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [*Lords*].

CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now taken into Consideration."—(*Sir Charles Forster*.)

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire): I beg to move that the Bill be considered on this day six months.

SIR CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall): As the Bill is opposed, it will be necessary to adopt the usual course in reference to opposed Private Bills, and to appoint a day for the Consideration. I would suggest that it may be convenient to take it to-morrow.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

POOR LAW ELECTIONS (IRELAND)—RETURNING OFFICERS, COOKHILL UNION.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to a letter addressed to the Local Government Board, signed by Mr. Patrick Connolly, P.L.G., on behalf of himself and other Guardians of Cookhill Union, asking the Local Government Board to prohibit Robert Graham, late clerk of Union, from acting as Returning Officer at coming Poor Law elections, but expressing their willingness to accept John Graham, present clerk, as Returning Officer if the voting papers were kept out of the custody of both Grahams from the time of their collection till the scrutiny commences; and, whether the Local Government Board is prepared to act on foregoing suggestions?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: Mr. Robert Graham, the person objected to, will not be appointed Returning Officer. The present clerk, Mr. John Graham, is the Returning Officer, and will act as such. The General Orders provide that the Voting Papers must remain in his custody until the return of the election is made, and this rule cannot be deviated from.

He will be held responsible for the conduct of the several proceedings connected with the election, and the Guardians have been so informed, in reply to their letter mentioned in the Question.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—THE LAND COURT—FAIR RENTS.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. John J. Hickey, of Lisnabog, Cullin, Millstreet, County Cork, who in the month of December last had an originating notice served on his landlord, Mr. French, to have a fair rent fixed by the Land Court; whether, notwithstanding that the application was made two months before the necessary time, his name has not been placed on the list for hearing by the Court; whether any pressure of business in the Court has prevented his name being entered for hearing; and, whether a number of other cases in the Kanturk and Macroom Unions have been similarly shelved; and, if so, whether he will call the attention of the Land Commission to the matter?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The Land Commissioners report that the facts are substantially as stated, and the reason of the delay is that suggested by the third paragraph of the Question—namely, pressure of business. The Commissioners were unable to list for hearing on this Circuit any application received after the 22nd of November. There are 200 cases from County Cork thus unlisted.

DR. TANNER asked, whether it was a fact that, practically speaking, there was no such pressure of business? He inserted a clause in the Question, which had been struck out at the Table, asking whether all the cases had not been finished nearly a month ago?

MR. HOLMES: It is impossible, at the next sitting, for the Sub-Commissioners to dispose of more cases than are already listed.

DR. TANNER: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give us the assurance that the cases will be taken as soon as possible?

MR. HOLMES: I cannot be responsible for the Land Commissioners; but I am sure they will do their duty in this matter.

EDUCATION—LOCAL COLLEGES IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to the letter of the Master of Balliol, which appears in *The Times* of the 3rd instant, urging the need of State assistance to Local Colleges in England and Wales; and, whether, having regard to the importance of, and urgent need for, higher technical and commercial education, as set forth in the Reports of the Royal Commission on Technical Education and Depression of Trade; Her Majesty's Government will introduce, or facilitate the passing of, a measure authorizing Local Authorities to contribute towards the establishment and maintenance of Schools and Colleges adapted to the wants of their several localities, and will recommend to Parliament annual grants in aid of the same?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, his attention had been called to the letter addressed to *The Times* by the distinguished gentleman to whom his right hon. Friend alluded, and who urged immediate State assistance to Local Colleges in England and Wales. He entirely agreed with his right hon. Friend as to the importance of the subject, and he might say that no one took a deeper interest in it than he did himself; but he must frankly state that, at the present moment, he was not in a position to introduce, or facilitate, the passing of a measure empowering Local Authorities to contribute towards the establishment and maintenance of Schools and Colleges adapted to the wants of their several localities. Nor was he in a position to recommend to Parliament annual grants in aid of the same. The question involved two points—one of local contributions, and the other of State grants. It was quite an open question whether Local Authorities should not be empowered to assist Colleges of this nature; but the question of State grants was a very large one. The attention of the Government was directed to it; but it was full of difficulty, looking to the immense expenditure which might be involved.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND) ACT—ENNIS UNION.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he was correctly informed when he stated that the Ennis Board of Guardians had not lodged the necessary documents with the Local Government Board to authorize that Body to send down their Inspector to Ennis Union to hold an inquiry under the Labourers' Cottages Act; whether, on inquiry, it has since transpired that the documents had been lodged since November last, but were "pigeon-holed" in the Local Government Board Offices; and, if the labourers in this Union will suffer for the negligence or dereliction of duty of the Local Government Board officials by being deprived of the cottages and plots this spring?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: There has been no such negligence or dereliction of duty as is suggested. The last of the necessary documents was not received by the Local Government Board until the 2nd of this month. The documents which were in the Office in November related to schemes previously inquired into, and though they could be utilized in connection with the present scheme they were not sufficient; and, as already stated, the necessary documents were not received until long afterwards.

PRISONS BOARD (IRELAND) — RICHMOND BRIDEWELL, DUBLIN.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to an article in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 24th February, 1887, with reference to the contemplated suppression by the Government of Richmond Bridewell, Dublin; whether the Prisons Board recommended the abolition of this prison; and, if so, on what grounds; would the result of the change be an increase to the rates of the City of Dublin; and, if so, to what extent; whether the present Board should consist, according to law, of four persons; is the present constitution of the Board limited to two persons—namely, the Hon. Charles Burke and a Mr. O'Brien; are the present members of the Board

paid officials; whether the Hon. Charles Burke was recommended by a Commission for compulsory retirement; on what grounds was the recommendation based; whether the Governor, the two medical officers, the two chaplains, and a number of minor officials of Richmond Prison must be pensioned under the contemplated change though still able to perform their duties; whether the pensions of these officials, whose present salaries are paid out of the Consolidated Fund, must be paid out of the rates of the City of Dublin; and, has the Hon. Charles Burke consulted the Corporation of the City of Dublin or the City Members, or any of them, in reference to these changes?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The attention of the Government has been called to the newspaper article mentioned, the writer of which is evidently under a good deal of misapprehension as to the pension charges upon local rates which would be involved by the closing of Richmond Prison, and as to several other points. As already stated, the closing of the prison has been recommended as a step in the consolidation of Dublin prisons advised by the Royal Commission. The matter is not yet decided upon. As in all such cases, it would be necessary to pension those officers whose services could not be utilized under the new arrangement. Care would be taken to keep these charges within the narrowest possible limits; and instead of amounting to £1,000 a-year, in the article in question, being charged on local rates, such charge would not exceed £400, and probably be only £200. It is not the case that the entire charge would fall on local rates. It has not been usual to consult Local Authorities on these subjects. The present constitution of the Board is two paid members, with a medical adviser. This is not contrary to the statute, which fixes a maximum not a minimum strength. I am not aware that the Royal Commission recommended the compulsory retirement of the Chairman; but the Report is before the House.

MR. H. J. GILL (Limerick): In case of a disagreement between the two Commissioners, who would act as umpire?

MR. HOLMES: The matter would be decided by the Irish Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked whether, before this prison was done away with, they would have an opportunity of discussing the matter in the House?

MR. HOLMES: I cannot answer that Question. I will undertake that nothing shall be done till the Chief Secretary takes his place. Then, of course, the Question can be addressed to him, and he will be able to reply.

MR. CONWAY: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not answered Questions eight and nine.

MR. HOLMES: I do not think the two medical officers must be pensioned under the contemplated change; and so far as regards the pensions of the others, they would not fall entirely upon the local rates. As I have already said, the Act of Parliament provides that only a comparatively small portion should fall upon the local rates.

FISHERIES (IRELAND)—BOAT-SLIP AT FANAD POINT, DONEGAL.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Board of Works in Ireland forwarded, on 8th November last, to the Irish Government, for report by the Inspectors of Fisheries, a Memorial from certain fishermen on the north coast of Donegal to have a boat-slip made near Fanad Point; and, whether the Report thereon has been received; and, if not, will he use his influence to hasten it?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: No Report has been made, because the application was not received until all the money available had been allocated for other purposes. It was, therefore, thought that an inquiry and Report would be useless.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—ACTION OF THE POLICE.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If District Inspector Bigley, at Lurgan, on the 1st instant, ordered the police to fire down Shankhill Street, on a Catholic crowd, without any necessity at the time, without the Riot Act having been read, and without magis-

terial authority, though a magistrate's residence was within 100 yards of the place; whether a young married woman, standing at her own door, was shot; and, if so, by what authority; whether Sub-Inspector Bigley is the same officer who refused to allow the police last June to fire when Orangemen were wrecking the houses of Catholics, when a large amount of property was destroyed; and, if the Government will order an inquiry into the conduct of the Constabulary since 1st of June 1886?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The police in Lurgan on the occasion in question were ordered to fire on a riotous mob, and they fired four shots. This order was not given until the police had been themselves both stoned and fired on by the mob, and their action had the effect of immediately restoring order. No serious injury, as far as it can be ascertained, was caused by the fire of the police; but 27 of the latter were struck and wounded with stones, some badly. It is not the intention of the Government to order such an inquiry as is suggested.

MR. BLANE: What authority had the police to fire? Was the Riot Act read?

MR. HOLMES: No, Sir; the Riot Act was not read, because there was no magistrate present; but it was a matter of urgent necessity, and the Constabulary were quite within their rights in firing.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman to answer the third paragraph in the Question.

MR. HOLMES: Sub-Inspector Bigley was Sub-Inspector in June last as well as at the present time; and as far as any inquiry has been made with reference to last June, Sub-Inspector Bigley was found to have discharged his duty. I need hardly remind the hon. Gentleman that the present Government was not in Office until two months afterwards.

THE ROYAL CONSTABULARY (IRELAND)—COUNTY INSPECTOR BROWNRIGG.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his atten-

tion has been drawn to a letter written by Dr. Charles Ronayne, one of the presiding magistrates who convicted County Inspector Brownrigg of assault, to *The Cork Examiner* of the 19th instant, denying the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland that the Bench were of opinion the case of County Inspector Brownrigg should never have been brought into Court, and stating that Mr. Kennedy, the complainant, "adopted the right course of seeking redress in the Constitutional way;" whether County Inspector Brownrigg admitted drinking whiskey previous to the assault; and, whether he will, under these circumstances, cause an inquiry to be made into the case?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: What the Chief Secretary said was, that the magistrates, in imposing a fine of a farthing without costs, stated that the case ought never to have been brought into Court. This is so. The announcement was made by the Chairman of the Bench, and Dr. Ronayne, who was one of the Justices present, expressed no dissent. As to Dr. Ronayne's letter referred to, it does not refer to the Chief Secretary's statement at all. It was written a fortnight before that statement was made. Mr. Brownrigg, being the defendant, was not examined, and could not, therefore, have made the admission alleged in the Question. Mr. Brownrigg is an excellent officer; and the Government consider that he behaved most properly on the occasion which gave rise to this charge.

DR. TANNER said, the statement of the Chief Secretary was made on the 17th, and the letter of Dr. Ronayne appeared on the 19th.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE IN IRELAND—EVICTIONS.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will consider the advisability of withholding the assistance of the forces of the Crown from pending evictions until Parliament has passed a law carrying into effect the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in Ireland?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The Go-

vernment are bound to afford the assistance of the Forces of the Crown to enable the Sheriff to execute writs and decrees of a Court of Law, whether of ejection or otherwise; and it is the intention of the Government to continue to give that protection.

MR. O'KELLY: In view of that intention, will the Government state when they will bring in a Bill to deal with this question in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission?

MR. HOLMES: The hon. Gentleman must put that Question to the Chief Secretary when he takes his place.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) asked whether it was the duty of the police to protect the agent in demolishing the houses of tenants?

[No reply.]

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—LORD KINGSTON'S ESTATES, CO. ROSCOMMON.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state the amount of money expended in carrying out evictions last year on the property of Lord Kingston, in the Kilronan district of the County Roscommon; and, also the amount of rent due by the tenants evicted?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: On four different occasions throughout the year—namely, February, April, July, and December—evictions took place on this estate. On each occasion it was necessary to afford the protection of a large force to the Sheriff. The cost of the police is estimated at about £1,000. I cannot make any statement as to the rent due.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND)—REMOVAL OF INSPECTORS.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether in the months of August and September a number of the Inspectors of National Schools, Ireland, were moved from one district to another, the transfer in some cases being from one end of Ireland to the other; whether the expenses of such transfers are usually defrayed by the National Board; and, whether it is a fact that these expenses have not yet been paid?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied): The Commissioners of National Education report that the facts stated are substantially correct; and that the authorized payments will be made upon the passing of the Supplementary Estimate now before the House.

INDIA—COLLECTION OF REVENUE—MAGISTERIAL POWERS.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Secretary of State will cause inquiry to be made into the expediency of continuing magisterial powers to Collectors of Revenue in India; whether complaints have been made in the Madras Presidency of recent years of the abuse of these powers; and, whether Revenue defaulters and unwilling witnesses are summoned to distant Courts and camps and kept in waiting from day to day by the adjournment of their cases?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The Secretary of State sees no necessity for causing inquiry to be made into the expediency of continuing magisterial powers to Collectors of Revenue in India; nor is he aware that complaints have been made in recent years in the Madras Presidency of the abuse of these powers, which have always existed. When collectors and magistrates are moving through their districts in the performance of their duties, witnesses and others who have business to transact may occasionally be put to inconvenience. That, however, is unavoidable, and every effort is made to lessen it as much as possible.

INDIA (MADRAS)—MR. H. E. SULLIVAN, COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether before his resignation on 7th December, Mr. H. E. Sullivan, the senior Member of the Madras Covenanted Civil Service, and senior Councillor of the Madras Government, was offered an opportunity of publicly meeting the very serious charges, supported by sworn affidavits, formally preferred against him by the Chief Magistrate of the Madura district; and, whether his case was mentioned in this House on

September 2, as then being under the consideration of the Secretary of State?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): On the 2nd of September I stated, as the fact was, that Mr. Sullivan's case was then under consideration. Mr. Sullivan had ample opportunities of meeting the charges brought against him, and he availed himself of those opportunities prior to his resignation.

ADMIRALTY—DEVONPORT DOCKYARD —THE FIRE-BRIGADE STAFF.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether, on the 3rd October last, the authorities at Devonport ordered the fire-brigade staff of the Keyham and Devonport Yards to be continuously on duty; whether they have been thus on extra duty for five months past; whether they have as yet failed to get any remuneration for such extra duty; whether their arrears of time, as returned by the Chief of Departments to the Cashier's Office, amounted to 55 days; whether their pay is still running in arrear; whether the Admiral declines to sign the pay-sheet without special Admiralty sanction; and, whether he will inquire into the whole of the circumstances?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It was considered desirable by the Admiral Superintendent to keep certain men in the Dockyard after working hours to meet fire emergencies, and the men so retained have been on extra duty for the last five months. There has been a delay in the payment of this extra duty pay, pending a settlement of fire arrangements which would be common to all the Dockyards, greater delay than was anticipated having occurred in completing the system; but the payment of the money due will soon be made.

NAVY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT)—NORDENFELT GUNS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he will state on whose application, recommendation, and responsibility Nordenfelt machine-guns have been manufactured for the Naval Department in considerable numbers during the last five years, in the face of the Report of the Committee

of May 1881, which recommended Gardner guns in preference?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The Nordenfelt rifle-calibre machine-gun has been introduced into the Navy during the last two years on the application, recommendation, and responsibility of the professional officers of the Admiralty, as being, after careful trials, a superior weapon to the Gardner guns of the same nature recommended in the Report of the Committee of May, 1881.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT—TRANSFER OF BRITISH SHIPS TO FOREIGN OWNERS.

MR. T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it is possible, under the general powers of the Board of Trade, to amend the practice understood to exist at present of allowing the transfer of British ships to foreign owners to take place simply by cancelling the Register, without the production of a bill of sale, as required in the case of transfers to British owners; if so, whether the Board of Trade will consider the advisability of amending their instructions to the Registrar of Shipping in this respect?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The question referred to by the hon. Gentleman was carefully considered in 1854 and 1879, and the Board of Trade and the Commissioners of Customs came to the conclusion that notwithstanding any difficulties which might occasionally arise through not examining and making clear previous title before transferring a ship from one nationality to another, yet the inconvenience to trade which would result from an alteration of practice would be such as not to render it desirable to make any alteration.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—BATTERSEA PARK.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he has received any offer for the purchase of the ground-rent of any land adjacent to Battersea Park, leased or agreed to be leased for building purposes; whether such offer has been accepted or rejected; and, whether, having regard to Section 11 of the Act 14 &

15 *Vict.* c. 77, he considers himself at liberty to reject an offer made by a leaseholder to purchase at a fair valuation the ground-rent reserved by his lease of land let to him for building purposes?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): The practice of the Office of Works has hitherto been to inform lessees of land adjoining Battersea Park, who have desired to purchase their ground-rents, that we have power to sell, but that we do not propose to do so as yet, probably not until building operations in connection with the estate generally have been completed. I am advised that we have this discretion as to the time of selling these ground-rents, subject to Treasury control; and that our practice is not contrary to the section of the Act of Parliament quoted by the hon. Member.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—THE O'DONNELLAN BLAKE FORSTER, J.P.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the attention of the Government has been called to a statement contained in *The Clare and Limerick Advertiser*, of 12th February 1887, to the effect that, The O'Donnellan Blake Forster, J.P., presided at a meeting of the Irish National League, held at Kilfenora on Sunday, the 6th February, 1887, at which a "Boycotting" Resolution was unanimously passed; and, whether, should the account prove accurate, Her Majesty's Government will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: I cannot tell my hon. and gallant Friend whether the particular statement that is referred to in this Question has been brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor; but I am aware that either that or other statements to a similar effect have been brought under his notice and inquired into, and the result had been that the gentleman mentioned has been removed from the Commission of the Peace.

VACCINATION ACTS—MR. R. KING, EVINGTON.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Depart-

ment, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. Robert King, of Mere Road, Evington, who in February this year was ordered, under a threat of distraint, to pay a fine inflicted in February 1886, on account of the non-vaccination of an infant which died in May; and, whether, under the exceptional circumstances, he will take means to relieve the bereaved father of the penalty inflicted for a dead child?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received no application for the remission of the fine in question; but if I do, the circumstances will be most carefully considered.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—CHALLENGES IN CRIMINAL CASES—"QUEEN v. GARTLAND AND M'KENNA."

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, If he can state what arrangements, if any, have been made by the officers of police and Mr. Kilkelly, Crown Solicitor for County Armagh, for directing Catholics to "stand by" in the case of the "Queen v. Gartland and M'Kenna," at the forthcoming Assizes at Armagh; and, if such arrangements have been made, whether they have been sanctioned by the Judge and Privy Council; and, if so, under what statutory authority?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): No arrangements of any kind have been made as to directing Catholic jurors to "stand by" at the forthcoming Assizes in Armagh, or any other place.

POST OFFICE--HEAD POSTMASTER-SHIPS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether there are about 900 Head Post Offices, and whether the appointments to about half of these are still made through political patronage; whether a Departmental Committee, composed of officers of long experience and high standing in the Service, called attention in their Report, a few months ago, to the evils arising from the present system of filling Postmasterships through political patronage, and strongly urged that this method of appointment should be entirely abolished; and, whether he will

ask the Treasury to adopt this recommendation, and thus throw upon the Treasury the responsibility of refusal?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): There are 915 Head Post Offices, and of these the Treasury at present nominate to 355. The Departmental Committee to which the hon. Member refers made recommendations in the direction indicated by the Question. I am, however, advised not at present to propose such an alteration to the Treasury. I do not differ from the Committee as to the desirability, if practicable, of eliminating the political element from these appointments; but there are very great difficulties in the way of organizing a system of appointments of the smaller description without consideration of local circumstances. I hope, however, as soon as I have been able to arrive at any positive conclusions on the subject, to discuss them with the Treasury.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURE—FRENCH PROHIBITION OF ENGLISH LEATHER.

MR. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is a fact that the French Government have, within the last few days, determined that no more English leather shall be used in the manufacture of their Army accoutrements as heretofore, and have also determined to compensate their contractors by an extra payment to cover the advanced price they will have to pay from being obliged to use only French tanned leather; and, whether the French Government also propose to introduce further taxation on all British leather with the object of preventing its importation; and, if so—as such action has entailed and will bring a further heavy loss upon the tanning trade of this country—the Government will be prepared to consider the advisability of placing such taxes upon the large importations to this country of French tanned leather as may, by preventing its import and so closing a large trade to France, induce the French Government to re-consider their action, and agree to a mutual free trade in leather between the two countries?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The tendency of the War Department in France, no doubt,

is to insist in all contracts on the use of French as against all foreign leathers; but Her Majesty's Government has no information as to the alleged compensation to French contractors to cover the advanced price they would have to pay if hereafter obliged to use only French tanned leather. No proposal has been made with regard to an increase of duties on British or any other foreign leather. The duties on leather imported into France are fixed by Treaty stipulations, of which Great Britain enjoys the advantages as long as the law of February 27, 1882, remains in force, and no change is believed to be in contemplation. There is, doubtless, a desire on the part of the French Government and Legislature to employ and encourage native industries; but for Her Majesty's Government to propose to retaliate by placing protective duties on French manufactured goods would be opposed to the fiscal policy which for many years has been adopted in this country.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman would ascertain if it was not a fact that a firm which had supplied Her Majesty's Government with leather, some of which was now in the Saddlery Department at Woolwich, had had its leather rejected by the French Government on account of its bad quality?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: That is a Question which ought to be addressed to the Secretary of State for War.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—NATIONAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS—THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What steps the Government intend to take to carry out the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the National Science Collections; and, whether the Government will lay upon the Table the Correspondence between the Treasury, Office of Works, and Science and Art Department, with reference to new buildings for the Science Collections and the Science and Art Department, generally since, but including, the Treasury Minute appointing the Inter-Departmental Committee?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The Government has

no present intention of incurring the expense which would be involved in carrying out the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee. I am informed that the expense would amount to about £220,000. The hon. Member is, no doubt, aware that the Committee were not unanimous, three Members having signed the Report, and one having dissented from its recommendations. The Government is not prepared to lay on the Table the Correspondence between the different Departments; because it is considered most undesirable that Departments should not be able to criticize each other in the freest possible way without the fear of Parliament checking their criticisms. It would be most undesirable that officers in the Public Service should be thinking how their Reports will be treated by Parliament, or by Members of Parliament, instead of how they can best promote the efficiency of their Departments.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—FOGS.

SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether the intrusion of fog into the atmosphere of the House of Commons cannot be completely prevented in future, and at a small expense; whether experiments formerly tried during the fogs of November, when the House was not sitting, were perfectly successful; and, whether he will direct that the air supplied shall be filtered through fine sheets of cotton wool?

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will cause filters, of appropriate material, to be applied to the entrance passages of the ventilating arrangements, so as to keep dark and yellow fog from entering the House?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (MR. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I am informed by Dr. Percy that during a November fog many years ago he made an experiment of filtering through cotton wool the air which is supplied to the House of Commons from the Commons Court, and that it was so far successful as to impress him with the hope that by this kind of filtration the interior of the House of Commons might be rendered fog-proof at but a trifling expense. Dr. Percy wishes me to state that this applied solely to the interior of this

Chamber; and that, in order to extend it to the lobbies, corridors, &c., outside the House, a large expenditure would be needed, and difficulties so great would have to be encountered that he doubts whether, with the existing structure, such extension would be practicable. He adds that before applying this process of fog filtration to the interior of the House of Commons it would be necessary to make preliminary experiments; and I have asked him to make such experiments on the earliest convenient opportunity. When the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) raised this question on the Estimates the other day, I was not aware that such experiments had ever been made.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—DONEGAL AND TYRONE MILITIA.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is intended to take the Donegal Militia to the Curragh this year; what will be the extra expense involved in travelling and other charges; whether the Tyrone Militia were encamped lately at Omagh; and, why the same plan is not adopted in Donegal?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (MR. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: A sum of £2,000 is provided in each year's Estimate for the cost of taking battalions of Irish Militia to train at the Curragh. This is considered to be a desirable arrangement, as many of the battalions have no opportunity in their own counties of associating with Regular troops, and some, from difficulties as to ranges, cannot go through their musketry course. The battalions go from their own counties to the Curragh, roughly, in rotation, the selection being made with great care by the Military Authorities in Ireland. The turn of the Donegal Militia to go to the Curragh came last year; but was deferred till this year, at the request of the officer commanding. The Tyrone Militia trained last year at Omagh, and will do so again this year; but in 1885 they went to the Curragh. The cost of sending the Donegal Militia to the Curragh is estimated at £900.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked that due notice should in future be given of the intentions with reference to this matter, so as to prevent unnecessary ex-

penditure on the part of poor people who made a large portion of their living by these Militia.

ARMY (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—INSPECTOR OF SADDLERY AT WOOLWICH.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether the Inspector of Saddlery at Woolwich resigned last October; whether the appointment has since remained vacant; and whether it is intended to fill it up?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): The vacancy caused by the resignation in October last of the Inspector of Saddlery has not yet been filled up. A temporary arrangement is under consideration; but until the inquiries into the organization of the Department which are now pending are completed, I do not propose to ask the Secretary of State to make any permanent appointment.

THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL—DISALLOWANCE OF EXPENSES FOR THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What Her Majesty's Government propose to do about £210,553 paid towards expenses of the Egyptian Army, and other sums, making in all £232,926, paid to the Egyptian Government in 1885-6, which the Auditor General has disallowed as paid without the sanction of Parliament; whether any sums have been paid to the Egyptian Government in 1886-7, either directly or by remitting payments due by that Government, beyond the £58,000 already sanctioned for Suakin; and whether Her Majesty's Government have yet determined if there is to be a Supplementary Vote for expenses connected with Egypt?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The Accountant General has not disallowed the sum mentioned by my hon. Friend; but he reported to Parliament that he had been unable to pass the accounts, in consequence of insufficient authority or insufficient vouchers. The Appropriation Account of 1885-6 is not yet, I believe, before the Committee of Public Accounts, who will deal with the matter.

Mr. Arthur O'Connor

As explained in the Supplementary Army Estimates, which will be in Members' hands to-morrow, Her Majesty's Government propose to forego the payment in the current year of the Capitation Grant for 1886-7. It is proposed to apply this contribution in settlement of claims for certain extraordinary services of the Egyptian Army, undertaken in 1885 and 1886, under the authority of the British Commander-in-Chief in Egypt. The Army and Navy Supplementary Estimates before Parliament cover all military expenses incurred in Egypt which it is proposed to impose on Imperial Funds.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL gave Notice that he should oppose the Vote.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—PAYMENT BY RESULT—EXAMINATIONS.

MR. W. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Penryn and Falmouth) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether, in consideration of the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Education, against the present mode of administering the Education Grant, and of the system of "payment by results," he will consider the advisability of issuing with the present Code an instruction to the School Inspectors to relax the stringency of their present mode of examination, and to assess the Grant in accordance with the general excellence of the work done, rather than on the individual pass?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): There would be an obvious inconvenience in anticipating the conclusions at which the Royal Commission may arrive upon the evidence laid before them; but if my hon. Friend will read the Code and Instructions to which he refers carefully, he will perceive that the assessment of the Grant now depends not only upon the individual pass, but, to a great extent, upon the general excellence of the work done.

POST OFFICE—THE SECRETARY TO THE POST OFFICE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Is there any foundation for the statement in *The Daily News* of 3rd March to the effect that the Secretary to the Post Office was presented with and received

an address of sympathy from certain officials in the General Post Office in connection with a difference of opinion between him and the Postmaster General; whether this constituted a serious breach of discipline; and, if so, what steps does he propose to take to restore discipline in his Department?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The Secretary has, at my request, communicated to me the address to which the Question refers; and though I cannot regard the proceeding as regular, I am inclined to attach to it rather an officious than an official character. I should be sorry to consider the matter as one of sufficient importance to warrant disciplinary notice. If I have to take official cognizance of it, I should consult the Head of the Government before determining upon my course of action.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—MONAGHAN ASSIZES.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the Jury Panel of the County Monaghan, for the trial of prisoners at the coming Assizes, has been increased 50 per cent over that of last year; whether, whilst the Catholics in that county are nearly three-quarters of the population, the Catholics on the present Jury Panel are not one-third; whether a number of those on the Panel are there contrary to the provisions of Lord O'Hagan's Act, having served within the last three years, and some even at the last Assizes—namely, George Moore, Samuel Wade, Alexander R. Lammie, Charles Ownens, William Parkes, numbered respectively 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 on the present Panel, and Nos. 6, 74, 65, 88, and 49 on the Panel of last Assizes; whether these persons were actually sworn as jurors on a trial for murder at such Assizes; and, whether he has any information to show that there are plenty of names on the Jurors' List of persons who have not served for three years or upwards, from whom a Panel might be made out without the above-named persons? I would like to ask a supplementary Question, of which I have given the right. hon. and learned Gentleman private Notice. It is, whether—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (interrupting) said: I will not give any information with regard to the supplementary Question of which I have had Notice. It refers to a case which is going on to-day, and it would be obviously inconvenient that I should answer it. With regard to the Question on the Paper, I have to say that I do not know, and have no means of knowing, the proportion of Catholics upon the present Panel of the County Monaghan; and I can only say, in reference to this, that the proportion of Catholics to the population can afford no test whatever as to the proportion of Catholics upon the Jurors' Lists. [*Ironical cheers from the Irish and Radical Benches.*] This is obvious to any person who reads the statutes. As regards the latter portion of the Question, I cannot go into a discussion in answer to a Question in this House with regard to individual names; but I have brought the matter before the proper officials in the County Monaghan, and I can find no room for believing in any way that the Jury Panel has not been constructed regularly.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman think it advisable that 12 Protestants should have been empanelled this morning to try an Orangeman for the murder of a Catholic?

MR. HOLMES: I have told the hon. Member that I will not answer that Question.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not answered the Question, which asks whether the Panel has been increased 50 per cent.?

[No reply.]

SOUTH 'AMERICA—BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA—THE BOUNDARY LINE.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the present boundary line, claimed by the British Government as between British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela, is based upon the Map, Surveys, and Report of Sir Robert Schomburgk; if the Government is aware that, antecedent to the Treaty of Munster, the recognized boundary line between Dutch (now British) Guiana and the Spanish (now

Venezuelan) territory was the watersheds of the Yuruary, Yurum, and Cuyuni Rivers; if the Government is aware that the population of these districts contain 90 per cent of British subjects, and an enormous amount of British property; and, if the Government will postpone a final decision on the subject pending further inquiries and information being obtained?

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, [Kingswinford]) asked Whether, considering the increasing importance of this matter and the breach of diplomatic relations at Venezuela, the Government would consider the advisability of issuing a Commission to settle the boundaries between British Guiana and Eastern Venezuela?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The boundary line claimed by the British Government is based on the Map, Survey, and Report of Sir Robert Schomburg. It would be impossible, within the limits of my answer, to describe the boundary line of Dutch Guiana and the adjacent Spanish territory previous to the Treaty of Munster, in 1648, as far as it is known to us. Information as to the British population in the Yuruary districts in 1884 is contained in a Report by Vice Consul Reddan, presented to Parliament—Commercial No. 38 of that year. Her Majesty's Government will be careful to collect all the information possible before arriving at any final arrangement. I am unable to answer the Question of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Staveley Hill) without Notice.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK—DEPUTATION OF CLERKS.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he recently received a Memorial signed by 431 clerks in the Post Office Savings Bank, respectfully asking him to receive a deputation of four of their number, in order that they might lay before him certain facts which they hold have injuriously affected their position and prospects in the Service; and, whether he refused to see the deputation?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University)): In reply to the hon. Member, I cannot, I think, do better than read the answer which I gave to the Memorialists. The

answer is somewhat lengthy, and I am sorry to trouble the House by reading it; but I think it is necessary, in order to place hon. Members in possession of the facts of the case:—

“The Postmaster General has carefully read the statement, dated the 11th ultimo, of the subjects on which certain officers of the Savings Bank desired to seek an interview with him. He observes that those subjects may be divided into two heads—(1) the nature of the accommodation provided for the staff; (2) the question of the organization of the Office. He thinks that the first subject is one which the clerks may properly and legitimately bring before him, if they suffer any serious inconvenience or injury on that score; but he would remark that the Department and Parliament have already given anxious attention to the matter; that Parliament has decided on the course which should be adopted; and that steps have been taken to purchase at a very considerable outlay an additional site, adjacent to the present building, and that a new structure will be erected as soon as possible. Meanwhile, he sees no other course but to hire, pending the completion of the new building, such premises as the needs of the Department may, from time to time, require. Premises accordingly have been hired, and it is possible that in a short time he will have to hire more premises. However, if the officers who signed this Memorial wish to make any further representation to him in writing upon this subject, or to offer any new suggestion, he will willingly receive it.”

The question of the organization of an Office stands in a different category; and I was obliged to decline to discuss it with the subordinate members of the Service, though I informed them that I had a full sense of its importance.

CENTRAL ASIA—TRADE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THIBET AND INDIA.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is a fact that a wall and fort have been built across the Jalep Pass, thereby preventing trade communication between Thibet and India; and, whether pressure has been brought to bear upon the Chinese Government by Her Majesty's Government to carry out Article 4 of the Convention made the 24th of July last, between Great Britain and China, relating to Burmah and Thibet, by which it is to be the duty of the Chinese Government to adopt measures to exhort and encourage the people of Thibet with a view to the promotion and extension of trade between India and Thibet; and, if so, what has resulted from such pressure?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Some Thibetans are reported to have built a fort or gate-house near the Jalep Pass with the view of blocking the road. Her Majesty's Government entertain no doubt that the Chinese Government will fulfil their engagements in regard to the encouragement of Indian trade with Thibet.

SALMON FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—LEGISLATION.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Salmon Fishery Bill for Scotland this Session?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): It was stated on the 17th of February, in answer to the hon. Member for Peebles and Selkirk (Mr. Thorburn), that the Amendment of the Tweed Acts was under consideration, with the view of making the law as nearly as possible the same for the whole country. I hope that a Bill to amend and consolidate the law will be brought in soon.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked, Whether the Government, pending legislation, would suspend the granting of any further charter or lease of Crown fisheries?

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: The hon. Member must give me Notice of that Question.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—REGENT'S PARK.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether the revenue derived from Regent's Park exceeds the cost of its maintenance; and, if so, what is the amount of such excess?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): The annual cost of maintaining Regent's Park, including Primrose Hill, is about £9,600. The only receipts derived from the Park have been obtained principally from grazing rents, and they amount to about £300. It is understood that there is a considerable estate in and about the Regent's Park belonging to the land revenues of the Crown and under the charge of the Department of Woods and Forests.

BURMAH—ALLEGED BARBARITIES.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he has received any information as to the alleged decapitation of dead dacoits by a party of Anglo-Indian Police, near Bassein, or regarding the "practice" alleged by *The Times* correspondent to exist among our Police Force in Lower Burmah of "decapitating dead shan dacoits and carrying their heads about the country?"

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): In reply to a telegram which was sent, as I stated last week, by the Secretary of State, the following information has been received from the Viceroy:—

"Following from Chief Commissioner:—It is true that heads of three notorious dacoits killed in a skirmish were brought into Bassein for purposes of identification. The heads were taken to wounded men in hospital who had been wounded by the dacoits, and were identified by those sufferers. The heads were then buried. It is true that heads of dacoits who are killed are sometimes brought into head-quarters for the purpose of identification, by reason of difficulty or impossibility of bringing in dead bodies from inaccessible places. Heads are not exposed or carried about the country for show."

The Secretary of State has taken such steps as will prevent this mode of identifying dacoits being continued, and the Viceroy telegraphs that he has issued the necessary orders.

POST OFFICE—STAMPED TELEGRAPH CARDS.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport) asked the Postmaster General whether he will consider the desirability and convenience of having stamped telegraph cards similar in size to the ordinary post card?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the Question of the hon. Member, I beg to state that telegram cards were first issued to the public in January, 1872. There was, however, no demand for the cards, and the Department could not but come to the conclusion that they were not required by the public. They became, indeed, so much dead stock, Postmasters at last using them in place of the 1s. stamp in payment for ordinary telegrams. Under these circumstances, they were withdrawn after four years' trial, and since the sale was discontinued there has been

scarcely any demand for their restoration. Had they been found generally useful, the Department would scarcely have failed to have had numerous representations on the subject.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—MEMBERS'
SMOKING ROOM.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience arising from the frequently crowded state of the Members' Smoking Room; and, whether he can take steps to increase the accommodation?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (MR. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I am well aware of the inconvenience caused by the insufficient Smoking Room accommodation provided for Members of this House, and I have been doing, and I shall do, what I can to meet the difficulty.

ADMIRALTY—NAVAL GUNS AND AMMUNITION—PAPERS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, with reference to the Surveyor General's opposition to the production of Papers and Correspondence regarding alleged deficiencies in naval guns and ammunition, amounting to upwards of £1,250,000, Whether any Correspondence has taken place between the War Office and Admiralty as to the amounts necessary to be provided for the supply of guns, ammunition, and warlike stores for naval purposes in the immediate future; if so, is there any objection to lay this Correspondence upon the Table; or, failing this, to give Members access to it on application at the Admiralty?

THE FIRST LORD (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Nothing is known at the Admiralty as to the allegations that deficiencies amounting to upwards of £1,250,000 have occurred, nor is there any correspondence on the subject. The Surveyor General of Ordnance has, in an answer given the other day, denied the truth of any such assertion. Delays in the delivery of guns have occurred which it is understood from the War Office have been unavoidable. As regards the latter part of the Question, it is undesirable to produce these Papers, forming as they do part of

an Inter-Departmental Correspondence between the Admiralty and War Office and Treasury; but I have no doubt that the statements relating to Army and Navy Expenditure to be made by the Secretary of State for War and myself will give the hon. Baronet some of the information he asks for.

ADMIRALTY—SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE
IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether Admiral Willems has recently issued to the officers commanding Her Majesty's ships on the Portsmouth station a "General Memorandum" requiring them to collect subscriptions from the men under their command for the Imperial Institute; whether the following passage occurs in such General Memorandum:—

"All persons who wish to subscribe to the funds required to establish this Institute should do so in the manner required by the Regulations contained in Article 1365, Addenda 1884. In addition to the lists required by that Article, another in the accompanying form, giving the names of all the subscribers, and the amount subscribed by each, is to be sent to my office by the 10th March for transmission to His Royal Highness;"

whether the said Article 1365 provides as follows:—

"When the sums subscribed (for charitable or other purposes) are partly in cash and partly charges against wages . . . the captain is to cause a list of subscribers to be made out, and signed by each individual against the sum he contributes . . ."

but,

"when the subscriptions are wholly in cash, a detailed subscription list is not required in office;"

whether the said addenda can be superseded or altered by any persons other than the Lords of the Admiralty; whether they are to be obeyed by all officers of Her Majesty's Service; by whose authority, and for what reasons, is the latter provision of Article 1365 superseded in the above "General Memorandum"; and, whether, in view of the statements which have been made in the public Press, that the men fear the consequences of not subscribing, he will take any steps to reassure them on the subject?

THE FIRST LORD (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The quotations from the General Order issued

by Sir George Willes, and also from the Addenda to the Admiralty Instructions, are correct. The Addenda cannot be altered by any person other than Lords of the Admiralty, and the Regulations contained therein have not been in any way superseded at Portsmouth. Officers and men have been invited to subscribe. The usual and recognized mode of collecting the money has been followed; and the only pressure put upon them has been by a suggestion that subscriptions should be limited to the amount of half-a-day's pay. A special list of subscribers was called for solely to enable the promoters of the Institute to carry out their expressed wish to record each individual subscription. The men of Her Majesty's Navy are too independent and much too well informed to be misled by the statements referred to in the Question.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): May I ask the noble Lord whether the money is to be obtained by stopping the pay of the men, or whether they are themselves to pay it?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I think the hon. Gentleman anticipates what my answer is. The men will bring the money themselves.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

MR. CRAIG SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the Bill, promised in the Queen's Speech, for improving and cheapening the process of Private Bill Legislation in England, Scotland, and Ireland will be submitted; and, whether, having regard to the pressure of Business in this House, he will consider the expediency of having the Bill introduced in the other House of Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have to say that Her Majesty's Government had hoped to introduce the measure to which the hon. Member refers in this House; but if the state of Public Business prevents us from doing so, the suggestion of the hon. Member will receive careful consideration.

THE EXECUTIVE (IRELAND) — THE NEW CHIEF SECRETARY.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked, When the Chief Secretary for Ireland would be in his place?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand,

Westminster): I have every reason to hope that he will be in his place on Friday next; but I am not able to go further.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE QUEEN V. DILLON—SAFETY OF THE DISSENTING JURORS.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the attention of the Government had been directed to a list published in *United Ireland* of Saturday last, purporting to give the names of those jurors who voted for the acquittal of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and his colleagues; and, whether the Government would take steps to secure the personal safety of those jurors whose names were not included in the list?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): My attention was not drawn to this matter until the hon. and gallant Member gave me private Notice of his Question since I entered the House; and I must, therefore, ask him to put his Question upon the Paper.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether ample notice would be given to the House before the Supplementary Estimates for Egypt were submitted; and, whether the Government could give any indication as to when they would be likely to introduce the Supplementary Army Estimates?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is intended to set down the Army and Navy Supplementary Estimates, including the Estimates for Egypt, for consideration on Thursday next. The Estimates themselves will be distributed to-night, or to-morrow morning.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman adhered to the statement he made on Friday, about the necessity of finishing the Supplementary Estimates before the close of the sitting; whether that was rendered necessary by the state of the law, or merely to meet the arrangements of the Government?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is the fact that the state of the law requires that the Supplementary Estimates should be passed by the 21st of March, and all the Estimates for which provision has to be made in the Appropriation Act must be passed by that date. The hon. Gentleman is aware that, in addition to the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates, there are the Army and Navy Supplementary Estimates; Votes to be taken on account of the Army and Navy Services; and also a Vote on Account for the Civil Services, by the 21st of March, at latest. The hon. Gentleman is also aware that, as regards the Army and Navy Estimates, it is permitted to Members to move Amendments on going into Committee. Under these circumstances, Sir, I feel it necessary to ask the House to dispose of the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates which are on the Paper to-day. The hon. Gentleman remarks that they might be taken on some other day. Sir, the House is aware that the Government have only control over the Business on Mondays and Thursdays; but on other days Motions may be taken on going into Committee of Supply—Motions raised by any Member in any part of the House. Under these circumstances, the Government do not feel that it would be fitting to permit, so far as we are able to prevent it, further delay in the consideration of these Estimates. In regard to several of them, they are simply automatic—that is to say, they simply carry out the law where insufficient provision has been made in the Estimates for the year. As regards others of the Estimates, there are, no doubt, questions which invite and demand the consideration of the House. And I should wish to appeal to hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House that they should approach the consideration of the Estimates, which do not demand the consideration to which I have referred, with as much self-restraint as may permit them to arrive at other Estimates which, undoubtedly, demand consideration in sufficient time and under conditions which will permit of their discussion in a seemly manner, and in a manner which will conduce to the dignity of this House. I make that appeal, Sir, because the arrangement which has been made is one which I believe is necessary to enable the House

to give due consideration to the Estimates which are before it.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): It is not, of course, possible to give an absolute engagement with respect to a great number of the Votes in the same clear and positive manner as where a single subject is being dealt with; still, so far as one can give a judgment, I do not think the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman is an unfair one. I hope, Sir, it will be found possible to dispose of the remainder of the Supplementary Civil Service Estimates to-night.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked why it was necessary to have the Vote on Account before the 21st of March? Would not the 31st of March do?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, the Votes on Account must be included in the Appropriation Bill, which must be passed so as to render the money available for the Public Service by the 30th of March.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7).

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

(1.) £10,560, Supplementary, Science and Art Department for the United Kingdom.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I do not intend to trespass on the good temper of the Committee for any lengthened period in discussing this Vote, and I thank the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House for having afforded us an opportunity of entering into the consideration of it at an early period of the evening. I called the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the necessity for doing so a few evenings ago, and I reminded him that the Education Vote, in regard to which this Supplementary Estimate is about to be taken, was passed at 3 o'clock in the morning in some day in August or September last, and that unless some opportunity was given for the consideration of

the Vote on this occasion, it would be impossible for any debate to have occurred at all this year upon the Education Estimates. I am sure it is not out of place to say that this Vote in the Education Estimates must be regarded not so much as a Party question, as a question of great and increasing national importance. I am well aware that the subjects connected with education generally, which are dealt with in this Supplementary Vote, are very restricted, and I shall not endeavour to go beyond the limits of the Vote that is before us at this moment. Any reference that I may make beyond the immediate subject of the Vote will be to points that have a bearing upon it, and are directly connected with them. The first item in this Vote represents an additional sum for the payment of results in connection with the Science Schools, and I wish particularly to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Department to the fact that, while the most laudable efforts are being made by the Government of the country to extend the system of Science Schools—for I gather that in the Estimates that are coming, there will be a still larger grant for this purpose—a great deal of the utility which must be derived from Science Schools and from the Government money which is devoted to them, must depend upon the manner in which the students have been sufficiently ground in elementary education in order to enable them, when they come afterwards to the Science Schools, to take full and adequate advantage of the provision made for them. I will, therefore, make this suggestion, that, with a view of utilizing this Vote, the Government should take into consideration whether they will not be prepared to give greater facilities for the teaching of science in the day schools and in the preparatory evening schools. At present it is well known that under the system of elementary education the instruction which is given is in connection with what are called the Standards, and that although certain Science Schools have been established here and there by the school boards, they have been established under a series of evasions of the Act of Parliament which I think is scarcely proper or suitable in this country at the present moment. On the contrary, I am of opinion that the Government would do

well if they would endeavour to legalize the power that, in some instances, the school boards have taken upon themselves to exercise; and perhaps I may be allowed to express a hope that the school boards may receive, by the passing of some Act or other, power to provide and maintain schools and classes for the purpose of giving instruction in the elements of such branches of science as are likely to do good to artisans and others engaged in industrial occupations. I cannot doubt that by the establishment of such schools throughout the country generally, for which I believe the country is fairly ripe, the Science Schools referred to in the Vote would become considerably more utilized. I would also urge on the Government the propriety of adding preparatory evening schools to the Science Schools, in which the school boards may, at any rate, have power to establish classes, not necessarily bound by the limitation that those who attend them shall have passed in particular Standards. When I make this suggestion to the Government, I am perfectly well aware that I may be met by a similar rejoinder to that which was given to an hon. Gentleman at Question time—namely, that regard must be had to the expense that would be entailed. In treating with this matter of Science Schools, I hope I may be allowed very briefly to call attention to the fact that we are very far behind our own Colonies in this matter. I do not propose to range over the whole surface of the globe, because I wish to be very brief in my observations; but we have now to contend against our own Colonies in the competition of the race for life. I might refer to many of our Colonies, but I will not do more than refer to the Colony of New Zealand. In that Colony there are 97,000 children of school age, and I have here in my hand a list of the number of those children attending classes strictly preparatory to admission to such Science Schools as are now under discussion. The Committee must bear in mind that the number—97,000—is the total number of children of school age—that is to say, under 15. Of that number, there are 59,000 children attending drawing classes, and no fewer than 74,000 receive object lessons. I do not think it is necessary to go into more minute details than that as to the condition of elementary educa-

tion in that Colony; and I believe it is not widely different from that in the other Australian Colonies. The whole of the children in those Colonies are gradually raised up with the extended knowledge of elementary science. I have indicated my object in bringing these facts before the Committee: it is to press upon the Government the desirability of introducing the same rule into our primary schools here with a view of making the money voted more usefully spent by the Science and Art Department of the United Kingdom. I would also urge upon the Government the necessity of extending Science Schools in the evening, so as to cover other branches of learning. The money asked for under this particular Vote includes the teaching of Art; but I do not see why the evening classes of this country, to which this Vote applies, should not include, among the other subjects with which they deal, what are commonly called literary subjects. There, again, I would refer the Committee to the action of the Colony of New Zealand. In that Colony history is taught in the elementary schools to nearly 40,000 of the pupils, and taking the neighbouring Colony of New South Wales there are 8,000 children out of a population of less than 1,000,000 attending classes on the history of Australia, showing the minuteness with which these subjects are taught in that Colony. I may perhaps be told that it would be difficult for the Government to organize and carry out examinations, and the general organization of the literary development of the schools to which this Vote applies; but let me remind the Committee that there is to be, no further off than the day after tomorrow, an important conference in the Senate of the University of Cambridge; one of the objects of which is to consider this very point—namely, what the Universities may do in the direction of introducing a literary element in the evening schools, such as the study of French, German, history, and geography. I would therefore suggest to the Government that they would find the old Universities not unwilling to co-operate with them in a movement of this kind for extending the general advantages of both literary and scientific education very widely to the people by means of evening schools, or by means, as they

may fairly be called, of continuing schools. I do not desire to weary the Committee by going over all that might be done in the evening schools; but I will allude to a matter more closely connected with the Vote immediately under discussion—namely, the question of evening technical schools. I have often wondered why more endeavour has not been made by the Science and Art Department to start something of that kind. Efforts of a private nature have been made in various parts of the country, and as long as any effort is made to provide purely technical education—I speak of technical education for workmen—I think it should be made as cheap as possible for those who belong to any particular trade; but, at the same time, a higher fee should be charged to those who belong to the trade, so that we may avoid the great mistake we might otherwise make of converting our workmen into Jacks-of-all-trades, and preventing them from concentrating their attention upon any one particular trade. But there ought to be no difficulty in enabling a man to study all the branches of a particular trade in the workshops. I believe that the Government, or the Local Authorities, in co-operation with the working classes, would be able to gain experience of what is wanted for the development of the Science Schools referred to in this Vote in the direction of technical instruction. I forbear from referring to the question of local Colleges, because that is the subject which was referred to to-day at Question time, and I will not therefore trespass upon the indulgence of the Committee upon it. But I have one practical suggestion to make with respect to the carrying on of the Science Schools, and it is this—the head of the Department is aware that means are now being employed in the right direction to provide examinations in chemistry in the Science Schools. If those examinations were made of a practical kind, instead of being in book-work and on paper, I think that more satisfactory results would be achieved. Now, the whole of physical science is a contest of man upon the powers of nature, and it altogether depends, not on book learning, but on actual manipulation; and every branch of science we conquer in education in the matter of bringing it within the limits of manipulation is a great conquest for the well-

being of education. Therefore, I will urge on the Government that the time is now come in connection with what are usually called physics and mechanics upon which a sufficient number of experiments have been taken—the time is now come when we ought to lay down, more or less, in connection with physics and mechanics, the same requisition for manipulation and experiment in elementary work as we have laid down with such advantage in chemistry. With regard to the scholarships, local exhibitions, and prizes, I only wish to make this remark, that in the Colony of New Zealand there are no less than 111 scholarships held by boys, and 52 held by girls, or 163 in all; the scholarships being of the annual value of £4,995. This is made the means of carrying on the education of these children from the elementary schools to the advanced schools, or the literary schools, such as we do not possess here. If we were to multiply these scholarships so as to give the number which would be required in England, on the same scale, we should find that it would be necessary to allocate no less than £250,000 in England to that purpose. And in a new country like New Zealand there are no endowments, such as there are in such multitude in this country. The only remark I would make upon that point is that the grants I have indicated in New Zealand go directly and almost wholly to the poorer classes; whereas the endowments of this country are a constant source of trouble, and I do not know by what exact process, but, somehow or other, they have failed to meet the requirements of the country. I am sorry that I should have detained the Committee so long; and I thank it for the patience with which it has listened to me. As this is the only opportunity we have had during the year of dealing with this matter at all, I have endeavoured to deal with some points connected with it, and, at the same time, to keep as far within the bounds of a discussion upon the absolute Votes submitted to us as was possible.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): Sir, I desire to offer a few remarks upon this Vote. I do not think there is likely to be any opposition in the Committee to the sum now asked for. I have had some experience in regard to the working of the Science and Art Depart-

ment, and it seems to me that the money which has been voted this year for the purpose of the Science and Art instruction of the country is money well spent. I entirely agree with the remarks that have been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart). The importance of scientific and technical education in this country cannot be over-rated; and I wish to point out that the Science and Art Department is in a position to assist and carry out in every way the requirements of the country on this subject. My hon. Friend has referred to the question of the introduction of practical examinations in Science, and in that respect I am entirely at one with him. There is, however, one important matter to which the Science and Art Department has not yet devoted its attention. It is one which, I think, deserves the attention of the Committee—namely, the question of manual instruction—instruction in the use of tools.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member, and also to other hon. Members, that it is not competent to discuss generally the work of the Science and Art Department upon this Vote, but only the special sums asked for in connection with that Department in regard to results, and scholarships, and exhibitions.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE: With regard to the special sums asked for in the Vote, there is an item of £8,600 for the results of the Science Schools; and it is stated that that sum is required on account of the increased number of students who have come up to the classes in the past year. I think the Committee is to be congratulated upon the amount of increased work which has been done. If I am in Order, I should like to supplement the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Shoreditch by reminding the Committee that not only in our Colonies, but on the Continent especially, the evidence obtained by the Royal Commission, of which I had the honour to be a Member, and which was presided over by my hon. Friend the Member for Northern Oxfordshire (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), shows us very plainly what may be done by consolidation. I trust that the Committee will pass the Vote as the beginning of a what-we may hope to get in full in some future time.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): Sir, I wish to put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Committee of Council upon a subject on which I asked a Question a few days ago. I presume I shall be in Order, as the Question has reference to the scholarships. As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the Report issued by the Science and Art Department last year gave the number of scholarships provided by the Department of the value of £50 at 16—of which £25 was given by the Department and £25 contributed by the locality. The elementary scholarships amounted to the smaller sum of £10 each, of which £5 was given by the Department and £5 contributed by the locality. These amounted to 116. Now, I think that such a number of scholarships are inadequate for the general demands of the country, and that it is impossible for them to do much for the Science and Art education of the people. This is a point which interests a good many persons in my own locality, and there is a general impression that if the amount towards these scholarships contributed by the Department be somewhat reduced in amount, and a smaller amount contributed by the locality, making the maximum limit of each scholarship, say, £10, a much larger number of scholarships might be given. I should therefore like the Vice President of the Committee of Council to give the Committee some information as to whether the amount of these scholarships might not be reduced to £9 for the Department, with a similar amount from the locality. There is one condition attached to the higher grade schools in which excellent education is given above that of elementary science, and that is the payment of a small sum—I believe 1s. a-week. Now, I think that if children passing out of elementary schools could obtain a scholarship—say, of the value of £5—to enable them to study in the higher grade schools, they would have the advantage of much higher training. What I ask is that £10 should be the maximum amount of each scholarship; and I should like to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President whether it is not possible to reduce the amount now given, so as to give facilities for a general increase in the number of scholarships?

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): There are one or two points in connection with this Vote upon which I should like to dwell, and I hope the Vice President of the Committee of Council will be able to give some information in regard to them. I want to know what have been the causes which have made the results so much better as to involve such a large additional Vote, because we have no particulars placed before us to show us why this large increase in the amount of the Vote should have been incurred. I think it is only reasonable and proper that, when a large additional Vote is wanted, we should have full information as to the improved results of the last examination on which these extra payments are made, and which took place in May last. There are several points in connection with this Vote upon which I should like to ask for definite information. I do not wish in any way to oppose the Vote; but, on the contrary, I trust the Vote may be extended if it can be made of use to the artizan classes. In the first item—which is for increased payments on results in connection with the Science Schools—the increased estimate is for £6,800 in addition to £72,000 voted last year. That is purely for the results of Science teaching, and it shows an increase of about 10 per cent. Then I find that the Vote for Art teaching is increased by £1,840, upon a sum of £35,000 already voted, showing an increase of 5 per cent; while the additional Vote for scholarships, local exhibitions, and prizes amount to nearly £2,000, and show an increase of nearly 20 per cent upon the sum already voted. Therefore, although the results have in Science been only 10 per cent better, and in Art but 5 per cent better, yet the actual result of the competitions has been so very much better as to require a 20 per cent increase to the prizes, &c. I think I am entitled to ask the Vice President of the Council, what have been the actual results, and why this large additional amount is asked for Art prizes and exhibitions, when the results in connection with the Art schools have been so comparatively small? The real question at issue is, however, whether the country is getting full value for the money voted; and it turns really on the question raised by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill)—namely, whether, with this

ever-increasing Vote, we are really doing any considerable amount of good, and are educating our artizans in technical and scientific knowledge? The Science and Art Vote has increased since 1867, when it stood at £64,000, to nearly £500,000—that is to say, nearly seven-fold in the present year. What I want to know is, whether the money voted really goes to improve scientific and technical education throughout the country. I believe that a great deal has been done during the last 30 years, and I speak with some knowledge of the subject, I have had a great deal of connection with it, but I am afraid we are not getting the work done so much among the artizan classes as we ought, and as we want. There is one subject which I should much like to bring before the Committee—namely, the circulation of Art objects. I know that that is not strictly connected with this Vote; but I think it would be regular to allude to it in connection with the subject of Art education, seeing that it is almost part and parcel of the Vote. The subject, however, we shall have to debate later on, when the Estimates for the year are laid before the Committee, and, therefore, I will not further refer to it now. Now, what has been the effect of the payments by results in the Science and Art Department during last year? The last Report of the Department for 1886 contained some remarkable statistics, from which I find that only 4,500 of the elementary day schools in the country out of a total of 19,000—or not quite one-fourth—are receiving instruction in the simplest rudiments of Art, namely, first grade drawing. That is to say, only one-fourth of our elementary day schools receive even the smallest homœopathic dose of Art education. The number of children receiving this instruction is only 71,000 out of 3,500,000. I am sure that hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree with me that, with the keen competition now going on with foreign countries, it is of the highest importance that our artizan classes should get real instruction in what we believe will be of so much benefit to them hereafter. The only way in which they can be protected against foreign competition is by having the same education that foreigners have. Are we to be satisfied, then, to find that only one in seven of the children in our elementary schools is receiving even this

small homœopathic dose of Art instruction? In regard to the Art and Science classes, I find there are only 150,000 young men and women who are receiving any education whatever in the more advanced branches of Science and Art, or only one in 10 of those who ought to be in those schools. When I refer to past history what do I find? I find that, in 1874, in the Schools of Art, there were 24,000 pupils; and in 1884 the number had increased to 37,000, or, roundly speaking, an increase of about 50 per cent. In the Art classes in 1874 there were 22,000 students, and in 1884, 10 years afterwards, there were only 24,000, showing merely an increase of 2,000; and yet the Vote this year has been increased by a very large sum. On referring to the third item, I find the case even worse, for, at the present time, the total number of persons taught drawing, painting, and modelling through the agency of the Science and Art Department is absolutely fewer than it was in the year 1882. The figures are these: In 1882 there were 909,216 pupils under a course of instruction, and at the present time—or, rather, at the time of the last Report—the number was 879,000—that is to say, that in spite of the large increase that has taken place in the amount of the Vote—namely, between £70,000 and £80,000 in four years—there are absolutely fewer pupils under instruction than there were at the beginning of this period. I ask whether that is a satisfactory state of things in these days of keen competition, and with ever-increasing Votes? If I enter into details, I find that the results are even more unsatisfactory. One of the subjects upon which we are asked to supplement this Vote for technical education, is the teaching of agriculture. Now, I take it that, at the present time, there are millions of persons employed at agriculture in this country; but how many does the Committee suppose, at the present moment, are under instruction in practical agriculture? I venture to say that there are very few indeed. Under theoretical agriculture—that is to say, chemical science, and so on, in the whole of the United Kingdom there are only 5,404 persons under such instruction. In Ireland alone, I am sure there ought to be a great many more than that under agricultural instruction, in order to learn the

elements of the art of better working the land. In machine drawing, there are only 14,000 students under instruction; in building construction, 7,500; in mechanics—in this great mechanical country—the Science and Art Department have only got 4,200 under instruction; in mining, 885; in metallurgy, 523; in practical metallurgy, only 218. These are the number of people who are under instruction, not in the higher grades of these subjects, but only under instruction in elementary knowledge; and I say emphatically that this is not a satisfactory state of affairs, considering that we are at the present moment spending something like £500,000 upon these matters. No doubt, we have done something in the past; but I venture to think that with all our trouble we are as yet only entering on the threshold of our battle. We are not competing in any way with other countries. If we refer to the institutions for technical education established elsewhere, we shall see distinctly that we are far behind in the race; and I wish to draw the attention of the Vice President of the Council to the fact that, if we are to hold our own in this great contest, our object must be to make the artisan and operative entirely a better workman and artificer, and that unless we do this, the enormous sums of money we are voting will not do that amount of good in the country which they are intended to do. I am quite prepared to vote for any reasonable increase in the Estimates for the Science and Art Department; because I am sure the only way in which we shall ever be able to get our artisans trained up, so as to be able to compete with other nations, is by providing them with scientific and technical instruction; but, at the same time, we must be satisfied that every shilling we spend is used in the best possible way so as to bring home, in the dense districts of our population in England, Ireland, and Scotland, that Science and Art, a technical education, which will tend to make them better workmen, and not merely spend it upon one or two huge Institutions which are too much crowded already, and which can be alone of but little advantage to the country generally.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I should also like to say a few words in support of the remarks which have fallen from the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley). I think the

Art and Science Department ought to extend its operations downward, as well as upward. The time has come, in my opinion, when the Science and Art Department should give some assistance to the numerous evening schools which have been started all over the country by voluntary support, for the purpose of giving a simple technical education to the children of the poor. In the City of London, at the present time, there are 84 evening schools, entirely supported by voluntary effort, costing £1,500 a-year. I happen to know that considerable difficulty has been experienced in raising adequate funds for the support of these schools, and that some of them are likely, in consequence, to be given up. Surely the schools in question are doing the work which the Science and Art Department ought to do themselves, for the benefit of the large class of persons who are not covered by the higher Science and Art Schools. The object of these schools is to get hold of the children of the poor as they leave the day school after school age is passed, and to maintain a hold upon them during the next two or three years of their lives, during which time their character is undergoing the process of formation. The education given in these night schools is largely technical—that is to say, it is simple, manual training, so as to fit children for useful employments in after life. When we look at the immense number of persons in the large towns who are destitute of instruction and totally unfitted for the ordinary pursuits of life——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is disregarding the ruling which I have already laid down. It is impossible to discuss the general working of the Science and Art Department under this Vote; but the discussion must be confined to the special sums asked for.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH: I was afraid that I was extending my remarks a little too far, in my desire to call attention to these matters. I will not detain the Committee further than to express a hope that the Science and Art Department will see its way to enlarge its scope, so as to become more practical and useful to the masses.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, N.): The demand now made upon the Committee is for increased grants in connection with fees

for results, and for scholarships, exhibitions, and prizes. I should certainly like to have some information as to the actual results which have been obtained. I agree with the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), that the vote of this money would be most valuable, if we could be convinced that the country is getting results in accordance with the money spent. I have always, however, entertained doubts in regard to that point. My hon. Friend has referred to the payments which have been made for instruction in agriculture. May I point out that the instruction given in agriculture, instead of being given in agricultural towns, has not unfrequently been given in large centres like London; and in that way, I think, there has been a considerable misapplication, in many instances, of funds which might be used with very considerable advantage. Reference has also been made to the very small number of young persons educated in the mechanical subjects. If a comparison is made between the number of students in these branches and in animal physiology, a still greater discrepancy will be found to exist. These payments by the Science and Art Department are, in a great measure, made merely by way of a subsidy to the salaries of the elementary schoolmasters. So long as that is the case, whatever else the result may be, I maintain that the country is not receiving from the funds the advantage which it believes it is receiving. Hitherto, in these discussions, the question has been whether the Science and Art Department should be altogether condemned, or whether it should receive unqualified praise. In my opinion, neither of those courses is the proper course. What we want to see is that we are getting money's worth for our money, and I fear that, as far as Science and Art are concerned, we are not getting the value of our money. I should be glad, indeed, if we were; and I think the administration of the Department requires investigation, so that we may ascertain whether the system of payment by results is altogether satisfactory, and whether it really secures the purpose for which the Department was originally founded—namely, the promotion of the industry of the country. I believe that that is not the case at the present moment, and I maintain that it is a sub-

ject which ought to be more fully considered.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): The hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart) has stated that the money we are about to vote has shown no signs of producing the full value that was expected from it. The hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) said, that out of so vast a population in the Science Classes we vote the public money to support and provide for so very few. Both of these observations point to the same defect—namely, that these Science Classes, like a great many other branches of our educational system, are detached. They are not part of an organic whole. There is no sufficient preparation made for them in the earlier education of the children, nor have the children, in their earlier instruction in the schools, been taught to look forward to such instruction. The right hon. Baronet the Vice-President of the Council has only recently accepted his responsible Office, and I trust that I shall not be deemed out of Order if I suggest to him that he would very greatly benefit not only the Science Classes, but also other parts of our educational system, if he would direct his attention to some effort to mould them into one organic whole. The hon. Member for Shoreditch has spoken of the number of children receiving object lessons in New Zealand. I dare say that all the children in our own elementary schools receive object lessons of some sort or other; but what I should like to see is that the object lessons are so directed and so framed that they should gradually lead the children to the details of scientific study. That is the case in Germany, as anyone who will read Mr. Matthew Arnold's Report will see. The child begins with the ordinary details of life, and he is gradually brought into a knowledge of technical science. That is what we want to see in this country, and if the Vice-President of the Council will look into the matter he will do a very great service to the country.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): I think that the cause for which I make this increased demand upon the Committee in connection with this Vote is of the simplest possible nature, and is uniform throughout the three branches of the increase. The increase

extends to Votes 1, 3, and 6. In regard to the first sub-head, the demand for the increase is owing to the fact that a larger number of students have applied for examination than had been estimated by the Department when the Votes were originally framed. With regard to the next head—namely, the Art Schools, the same cause has operated to increase the expenditure—a far larger number of candidates having applied for examination than was counted on when the Estimates were first framed. As in the Science Schools, so also in regard to the Schools of Art; and the Estimates have swollen, and swollen considerably, not only on account of the number of students who have been examined, but also on account of the excellence of their work. I may also say, in passing, that, in regard to the estimate of the number of students likely to come up for examination, it is not always an easy one to arrive at. An estimate can only be made by taking the existing number of schools, and then striking an average, and by that means endeavouring to ascertain how many are likely to come up for examination. As to the third head, the same cause also operates in the preparation of the estimate. A larger number of students have succeeded in winning scholarships, exhibitions, and prizes than was estimated. Although it is never a very pleasant duty to rise in this House to defend a Supplementary Estimate, yet I think hon. Members will admit that there is a bright side to the picture, in the knowledge that the increase in our demands is occasioned by the success of the students who have been examined. I must say that I take a most sanguine view of the results of the working of the Science and Art Department. While I was prepared for some discussion in regard to these three items which appear in the Vote, I hope I may be excused from going closely into these questions, because they are matters involving technical details and considerable responsibility to myself and the Department with which I have so very recently become connected. With regard to the chief points of the discussion, I may say generally that no one is more aware than I am of the growing feeling that exists in favour of technical education. In fact, it is no Party question. I do not think at this moment it is possible to hit on a question on which there is greater

unanimity than in regard to this matter of technical education. The question, however, is one of great difficulty. How difficult it is I may point out by an incident which happened this evening in reference to a Question which was put by the hon. Member for South Manchester (Sir Henry Roscoe) as to the accommodation at South Kensington. That is a very important question, and a very old question. I think it is something like 30 years since a promise was made that there should be an addition to the buildings at South Kensington. The answer of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night was that there is not a superfluity of money in Her Majesty's Treasury at this moment to enable him to take a sanguine view of the matter. The question is not only a very large one as regards finance, but it is somewhat fallacious to argue it, as was done by the late Mr. Forster in introducing the Education Bill—namely, that it would only cost so much to carry into effect any particular scheme concerning the question of technical education. It is very easy to urge that a scheme may be launched on this great subject; but what Her Majesty's Treasury have to consider, and what I am bound also to consider is, not what such a scheme might cost this year, but what the ultimate result of such a scheme may be if it becomes popular in the country and is carried to a successful issue. I will only point out now what an enormous sum we are paying for national education in comparison with the amount we started with originally in 1857. The hon. Member has alluded specifically to the contracted position of affairs in South Kensington. I have entered on the task which lies before me with no prejudice in favour of any Department. I am one of those who have always believed in adapting a department to the wants and circumstances of the age. An hon. Member opposite has mentioned the desirability of inquiring now as to whether we should not adapt South Kensington so as to render it more able to cope with the new questions of technical education which are rising among us. So far as I am concerned, I not only look at the question without prejudice, but with an honest and sincere desire, if possible, by inquiry or otherwise to adapt not only the building but the Department at South

Kensington more and more to the circumstances of the age, and specifically in regard to the great advantages of technical education. The hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) has suggested, in reference to the scholarships, that it would be advisable to reduce the sums now given by the Department in connection with scholarships. The hon. Member is aware that the sums now given are allocated by the Department for three years—namely, £4 in the first year, £7 in the second, and £10 in the third. Therefore, with the local contribution, a scholarship is worth £9 in the first year, £12 in the second, and £15 in the third. My answer to the hon. Member, when he asks if it is not desirable to reduce the sum given to these scholarships, is that if you reduce it to a small amount you would entirely destroy the present scope of the grants. At present they are made to apply not only to education, but to maintenance. No one would be more glad to see them increase than I should, if I had the means; but if you reduce them to very small sums they will not answer the purpose for which they are intended; and, therefore, I cannot give any promise to reduce the sums, because I think that if that were done the effect would be to destroy their scope and object. I am aware that I have not dealt with all the questions which have been raised in the course of this discussion, especially by the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart), who urged the great importance of elementary education *qua* Science instruction in the schools. The point of the hon. Member is, that at present there are children in the elementary schools who are not in a fit condition to understand or appreciate scientific instruction. The hon. Member further urges that the children should be admitted into night schools, and that there should be adequate instruction on special subjects in addition to the Standards. [Mr. JAMES STUART: That was part of the suggestion I made.] I do not think that it would be possible to relinquish the Standards altogether. In conclusion I hope hon. Members will understand why it is that I have not dealt more specifically with some of the questions which have been raised. I would again urge this Vote upon the attention of the Committee on the ground

that the increase has been caused by an unlooked-for success.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I should not have thought it necessary to say anything to supplement the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council if it had not been for the remarks which fell from the hon. Gentleman who spoke before him (Mr. Picton) in reference to this Vote. The sum asked for is £10,500 in excess of the amount asked for last year, and it is the result of the automatic increase in which every Member who has spoken ought to rejoice. One hon. Member, however, seems to think that the increase has only been in the Vote and not in the absolute results obtained.

MR. BARTLEY: What I stated was, that the same relative increase in results had not been obtained as compared with the increase of the cost, and I showed that the number of students taught drawing, painting, and modelling through the agency of the Science and Art Department since 1882 has fallen off.

MR. MUNDELLA: I presume that the recent transfer of some of the elementary teaching to the Education Department accounts for the difference; but I still maintain that the increase has been large and very rapid. Anyone who knows anything of the work going on now in the country in connection with the Science and Art Department must admit that there never was so much work—and never as good work—as is being done at this moment. In 1875 the total number of pupils, including the Science and Art Elementary Schools in every branch of art instruction, was 444,000, while in 1885 the number had increased to 883,000, or nearly double. There may have been a slight diminution in the Art classes; but the hon. Gentleman knows the advantage of transferring the Art classes to Art Schools, and there has been a large increase of Art Schools, and the work is very much better done in the Art Schools than in the Art Classes. I am quite sure that it is the desire of the Committee that this work should extend to children in our elementary schools. Everyone above the infant schools should be taught drawing, which is an essential part of an industrial education. No

greater mistake can be made than not to make the teaching of drawing obligatory. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall make drawing—the use of the pencil for industrial purposes, not for art purposes—necessary in all our schools. It is a deplorable thing to go from school to school in Germany and see the wonderful facility every German child possesses in the use of the pencil, and then to come to English schools, some of the best in the country, and to find that because the teacher is not paid sufficiently well, or because he has not been sufficiently well instructed himself to be able to teach the children, nearly one-fourth, certainly much less than one-sixth, of the children in the elementary schools at present receive no instruction whatever in drawing. What, after all, such a change means is increased expenditure—a swelling of the Vote for the Science and Art Department. Large as the Estimates are as compared with 25 or 30 years ago, and as compared with the small grant Sir Henry Cole obtained from this House for the good work of art instruction, as contrasted with the grants in other countries similarly situated to ourselves, our Estimates are a disgrace to us. What is the whole expenditure on education in England? It is less than 5 per cent of the whole expenditure of the country; whereas there are some countries whose expenses for education form one-third of their whole expenditure. [An hon. MEMBER: Where?] In Switzerland it is more than one-third, I believe, while in this country in 1887, the Science and Art Expenditure only reaches £129,000—a sum hardly more than two or three institutions on the Continent expend annually. I believe that the expenditure at Charlottenburg, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Zurich is quite as much on Science and Art as we spend altogether in this country. If any hon. Member thinks that this money is wasted I should like him to visit a few of our own schools, such as that at Bradford, the school in the little town of Keighley, and the Central School in Manchester. In Manchester, one out of 65 of the population is receiving a grant from the Science and Art Department; whereas in the Metropolis only one in 1,000 is receiving it. London is a long way behind many of the towns in the North of England, and compares very unfavourably in the cause of education.

Mr. Mundella

The hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart) called attention to the case of New Zealand. Yes; but we cannot hope to compare with our Colonies, if we are to confine our expenditure to such modest sums as we have here. The money voted in New Zealand goes to the whole of the children, and all classes go to the same schools. There are graded schools, and from top to bottom all of them are free schools, the expenses being paid by the State. My hon. Friend the Member for North Oxfordshire (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) said he thought that some of our Science teaching is given in a wrong manner, and in wrong places. I must remind him, that when he speaks of agriculture being taught in large towns, he is labouring under a considerable error. I remember when I was at the Committee of Council, that we made a rule distinctly against such teaching in the large towns; and that the grants have been cut off wherever there has been agricultural teaching in large centres. There have been complaints upon this matter at various times. I remember that at Cambridge it was stated—"We have people coming in from the locality who are entitled to be taught agriculture, because Cambridge, after all, is an agricultural centre." I do not think, alter all, that anything could be more judiciously applied than money given in this way. I have spoken upon the subject with my right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland), who administered the Department with so much ability during the time it was under his control, and he knows that there is no Department of the State at this moment where every farthing is so closely and carefully looked after as in the Science and Art Department at South Kensington. No doubt, the Treasury thinks that it can govern the world, and that it knows everything in connection with these matters a great deal better than the Minister of Education or anybody else; but all its business is to keep down the expenditure. I believe there will be no real good done in this matter, and no really good government of the country, until the expenditure upon education is largely increased. I am afraid I am now going into general questions; but when the next opportunity arrives I shall have to speak much more strongly

on this question of education. All I can say now is that I rejoice in the increase of this Vote. I hope the Committee will grant it without demur; and I also hope that the Vote will go on annually increasing.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the Committee will allow me to say a few words on this subject before we pass away from it. I trust that no one will think that Members on the Ministerial side of the House regard a Vote of this character with any grudging spirit. If any hon. Member does, he greatly misjudges the sentiments of those who sit near me. On the contrary, we are of opinion that the Vote is one of the highest importance, and that the increased attention of the country ought to be directed both to scientific and technical education. In reference to what has been stated by the right hon. Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) with regard to drawing, I sincerely hope that drawing will be taught to every child in the country, whatever may be the class to which he belongs or the nature of the instruction given. I might probably be departing from the rule which has been laid down in regard to this discussion if I were to enlarge upon this subject; but I think I am entitled to say that every quality which a citizen ought to have may be produced by teaching the child drawing. It teaches him accuracy, skill, application, and knowledge of form, all of which must be of service to him in his future career. In regard to evening schools, there is no subject more important. If we could secure the establishment of well-arranged evening schools, I am satisfied that great advantage would arise; but if such schools are conducted in a loose manner, and the instruction is not complete, then our efforts would probably be wasted, and disappointment would result. With regard to the large sums spent in technical education in foreign countries, as compared with that which is spent in our own, it must be remembered that foreign countries, for the most part, have their education based on public grants; whereas, in this country, we have not only public grants, but school fees, which amount to a large sum, paid by the parents; local endowments, benefactions bequeathed by our forefathers; and also magnificent insti-

tutions which are supported by voluntary subscriptions. Taking these additional sources of income into consideration, I believe that if we draw a comparison between the public grants of foreign countries and the four items of income I have mentioned, we should find that our expenditure for education is equal to that of foreign countries, and not so inferior to them as some persons may infer. I rose to make these few remarks, because hon. Members on this side have taken very little part in the discussion, and I thought it would not be right that there should be any misapprehension as to their views. I only wish to add my complete concurrence with those who welcome this grant without grudging it, and who rejoice at the increase it displays year after year.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.): I wish to make an observation in connection with the items showing an increase in the payments for results. I think the Science and Art Department is about the best advertised Department in the State. We have the contractors of that Department advertising various things in connection with it, and also bringing their own personality before the public. Colonel Donnelly, the director, has recently issued a circular containing certain paragraphs which are not only vague but contradictory in terms. The object of the circular appears to be to lower the salaries of the teachers to prevent the same satisfactory results from being obtained as hitherto, and to bring upon the teachers a loss of reputation. In the first paragraph of the circular we are told that the work, in order to be satisfactory, should be well executed from examples of a good work in the section of study through which the student is passing.

THE CHAIRMAN: That circular refers to the Estimate of next year, and does not refer to the expenditure of the current year in respect of which this Supplementary Estimate is presented.

MR. CONWAY: Is not the principle of the circular open to observation? The circular itself states that the pupils are to send in the results of their studies before May.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be quite irregular to discuss the expenditure of next year in connection with a Supplementary Estimate for this year.

MR. CONWAY: Has not this money to be voted?

THE CHAIRMAN: It has already been spent.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): In rising to say a few words about the Vote, I do not wish it for an instant to be understood that I desire in any sense to object to any item which may be brought forward in any of the Supplementary Estimates about to be placed before the Committee, and especially in regard to this Estimate. On the contrary, I think that this important Department of Science and Art ought to receive the fullest attention, and that it should be thoroughly looked into by the Committee; but I think it has been clearly shown by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) that there are many points in connection with this Estimate for the Science and Art Department which might be rectified for the great benefit of the country; and notably in connection with the question of free-hand drawing, which does not appear to have received that amount of deliberate attention which its importance deserves. The right hon. Gentleman showed that in other countries, where it has received adequate attention, very good results have been produced. Now, I happen to know something about the German schools, having been brought up in some of them, and I know personally the great importance which is attached to this subject by the Government of Germany—a Government which is obsequiously followed by Her Majesty's Government in many other departments—notably, that of war. It is very well known that Her Majesty's Government have largely attempted to carry out the German methods of education in connection with the war department; and if they desire to carry it out successfully in connection with that all-important Department of Science and Art, it will be necessary for us to take steps for securing adequate instruction in our schools in free-hand drawing. The original Estimate for the Department, which has already been passed, was £104,000, and a sum of £10,500 is now required in addition. In the South of Ireland—in the city to which I am proud to belong—namely, the City of Cork—a native of which built the House in which we are now assembled, and adorned the cor-

ridors through which we pass—the subject of Science and Art has been studiously neglected by the Department. It was not until a native of the City of Cork—Mr. Crawford—put his hand into his own pocket—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman must confine his observations to the sums specifically asked for in this Supplementary Estimate.

DR. TANNER: I apprehend that a portion of the sum has been used in connection with the buildings which have been erected for the purpose of giving instruction in Science and Art questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is obvious that no portion of this Vote has been used in that way, seeing that it is simply for payment for results.

DR. TANNER: Then, I will pass from that point and come to another one. I always have paid the greatest possible deference to any opinion you may express, and I desire to confine myself, as much as possible, to the Vote which is now brought under our consideration. As an Irish Protestant, and as an Irish Protestant Member of a Party which is mainly Catholic in Ireland, I desire to call attention to two institutions which are doing admirable work in the promotion of Science and Art—namely, the Artane School, in Dublin, and the Christian Brothers' School at Cork. Notwithstanding the attention paid to Science and Art in those schools, they get no payment for results; and they are doing, practically speaking, the work that ought to be done by this Department. If the Government desire to act in a right manner, and in a generous spirit, I think they ought to take these institutions into account; and grant some portion of this money to institutions such as these, which are trying to do a good, useful, and noble work, so as to aid them in promoting the welfare of Ireland, and, in so doing, to promote the welfare of Great Britain and the country generally.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I have had some connection with local schools, in which an attempt has been made, as far as possible, to develop, for the sake of the people in the district, some practical knowledge of agriculture—that being, of course, the great industry of Ireland. Agriculture represents in Ireland exactly that which, in your technical schools, you are seeking to develop here; and if some teaching

were given in Ireland in reference to agriculture, it would represent in that country the manual instruction you desire to extend to the artisans of this country. I have endeavoured to ascertain how much of the public money is devoted to agriculture, and the teaching in the board schools of Ireland; and I find that it does not reach the sum of £5,000—the gross vote being somewhere about £10,000, and the return in the shape of money received from the pupils and from the schools amounting to something over £5,000; so that the great industry of an entire country, on the prosperity of which it has to depend, is actually starving. In any further dealing with the extension of technical schools, I would ask the President of the Council to endeavour to make up for this great deficiency in Ireland. I believe that probably a great amount of the deficiency hitherto found to exist in the successful management of farms in Ireland arises from the continual neglect of the technical education of the people who have to depend upon them. I would therefore, ask the Vice President of the Council, if it is not possible to extend in some way, in the same manner where a desire has been expressed to extend technical education in this country, assistance to Ireland in the shape of practical instruction in agriculture.

MR. BARTLEY: I will only detain the Committee for one moment. The right hon. Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield seems to question the statement I made concerning the reduction of the number of students taught Art during the last few years. I have here the Returns of the Department; and I find that the grand total of persons taught drawing, painting, and modelling through the agency of the Department was, in 1882, 909,216; in 1883, 843,135; in 1884, 851,805; and in 1885, 879,000. Therefore, I was strictly accurate when I stated that since the year 1882 there has been a decrease of the number of pupils under instruction. The point I complain of is, that, although the grants are larger, the number of pupils taught has been absolutely less.

MR. SCLATER-BOTH (Hants., N., Basingstoke): I fail to see why it is that the Committee is asked to go into these questions of education at this moment. I think it would have been better if the discussion had been postponed

until the Education Estimates for the year are brought forward soon after Easter. It does not appear that the Vote now before the Committee, although not unimportant in amount, is anything more than the excess incurred over the original Estimate; and the House of Commons possesses machinery by means of which the excesses on the Votes can be commented on and discussed. It will be the duty of the Controller and Auditor General, and of the Committee on Public Accounts, to present a Report upon them; and the proper opportunity will then arise for discussing them. It would be improper, by taking the discussion upon a Supplementary Estimate, to withdraw the excesses from the Controller and Auditor General, and the Committee on Public Accounts; and such a practice would, in my opinion, be most unfortunate. It would cause the House to discuss the same subject twice over; whereas once is quite sufficient in the same Session of Parliament; and it would interfere with the proper method by which excesses of expenditure on the part of a Department are brought home to the Treasury and the House. I have often made this observation before, and successive Secretaries of the Treasury have agreed with me in principle, but have conveniently forgot it when it was considered desirable to revert to the old practice in order to shield themselves by the action of a Supplementary Estimate from the ordinary consequence of an excess.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (University of London): I think it would be an unfortunate and a retrograde step if the Department were to adopt the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. Whenever the Departments find that the Estimates are likely to be exceeded, it is their duty to come to Parliament for a Supplementary Vote. These Supplementary Estimates are for expenditure which is being actually incurred in the current year; excesses over the amounts over and above the Votes. Now, if Supplementary Estimates are not presented, the result would be to withdraw that expenditure from the cognizance of Parliament. The Public Accounts Committee, to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, has always been anxious to keep down excesses—that is to say, expenditure above both the Es-

timate and the Supplementary Estimate—as much as possible; and last year, I am happy to say, that object was attained, and there were no excesses. The discussion, though interesting, has travelled, perhaps, rather beyond the Vote, into a general discussion; and I will not contribute further to it than to make one remark on the speech of my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council—namely, that I hope he will not look merely to the expenditure which any given change may involve, but rather to the result which it is likely to attain, and the advantage which the country will derive from the expenditure.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): So far as this matter of Science and Art instruction is concerned, I dare say the Committee has made up its mind; but there is one point on which I think we ought to have a little more information than is contained in the Paper on which the Estimate is printed. I have taken a good deal of interest in Science and Art so far as the institution in the City of Cork, of which city I am an inhabitant, is concerned; and I am not aware that any portion of this money has, either directly or indirectly, been used in subsidizing that institution. It is kept up by a private tax, which amounts to 1*d.* in the pound, by private donations, and by private bequests. The institution itself is very flourishing and thriving; and I must say that the details given in this Vote are so vague and ambiguous as to lead me to believe that not a single penny of the money voted by this House goes to the support of that institution, which is found to be of such value and use in the City of Cork. I dare say the same remark may apply to similar institutions in other towns and cities in Ireland. I have no objection to a reasonable expenditure of public money in this direction; but I should like to have a little more information upon matters of detail. I should certainly like to receive some information from the Secretary of the Treasury or the Vice President of the Council that my native city is not altogether overlooked or ignored as far as the application of this money is concerned.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): My hon. Friend the Member for West Donegal (Mr. O'Hea) has spoken of the action of the Department of Science and Art in

connection with the institution for Science and Art in Cork. I wish, in following him, to speak of its action in relation to the City of Dublin. In Dublin there is a so-called College of Science, which, in my opinion, has done its work in the direction we all desire, inasmuch as it has begun not at the beginning, but rather at the end. In technical education the object we ought to have in view is to begin in the elementary schools, and train the young mind in the direction of technical knowledge, so as to prepare them for the superior work in which they may afterwards be engaged. I have found that a great necessity exists in Dublin for technical education, and knowing the inefficiency of the so-called College of Science and Art, the people of Dublin put their heads together and established a technical school. The Corporation has contributed pretty largely to the maintenance of that school, and I hold that it is the duty of the Government of the day to give a helping hand in a work of such deep importance. I also believe that technical education might be very properly and usefully introduced into the workhouse schools, so as to train up the young people in those schools with the object of rendering themselves useful when they go out into the world, and to prevent them from becoming an incumbrance and a pest to society. If the poor youths and girls also in the workhouse schools could be made useful members of society, instead of being chronic inmates of these unfortunate institutions, or preying upon society when let loose, the whole of the community would reap a substantial advantage. Therefore, I appeal to Her Majesty's Government to look at this question in a practical and generous spirit, especially in regard to Ireland. I also think it right to ask, under the head of payment for results in the Science Schools and payment for results in the Art Schools and classes, how much of this money goes to Ireland? I believe it is admitted on all hands that the young people of Ireland evince a superior taste, not merely in Science, but in Art. I have seen wonderful results in regard to Art in some of the schools. I have seen bare-legged boys and girls sitting at the work-table and reproducing Art pictures on pottery, such as would command the approbation of the people of this country if they could be brought

under their notice. Therefore, I am of opinion that more consideration should be given to us in the direction I indicate, and that, if possible, a grant should be given for Art education in Ireland.

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: I hold in my hand the last Report of the Department of Science and Art, and in that book will be found the exact sums which the schools in Ireland have received. The hon. Member for West Donegal (Mr. O'Hea) will find that the school in Cork to which he has referred received £151 13s. 1d.

MR. O'HEA: I am glad to find that some consideration, however trifling, has been given to the important institution in Cork.

Vote agreed to.

(2.) £23,900, Supplementary, Public Education, Ireland.

MR. TUIE (Westmeath, N.): Upon this Vote I desire to call the attention of the Committee to the unfair treatment which the Irish National School teachers are receiving. The grievances of the teachers have been before successive Governments, and when the Conservatives were last in Office a deputation which waited on the Chief Secretary for Ireland and other Members of the Government was told that if the Government remained in power the whole question of education in Ireland would be dealt with comprehensively and immediately. I think it is a lamentable state of things that nothing has since been done. It is admitted on all hands that the result of the system of education carried out by the National teachers in Ireland has been very good; in fact, as compared with England and Scotland, it is in the highest degree favourable. The standard is higher than in England and only a trifle lower than in Scotland. Yet it is a remarkable fact that the majority of the National teachers in Ireland receive less pay than an ordinary, well-skilled artisan. In some cases the salary is as low as £35 a-year. The average is only £63, and comparing that with the average salary received in England—£120—the difference is very great indeed. You have as good results in Ireland as in England, and yet only one-half the salary is paid. That is not a state of things that ought to exist, and I hope the present Tory Government that formerly promised so much for the Na-

tional teachers will do something for them before the close of the Session. I regret the retirement of the late Chief Secretary, because I believe that nobody understood the question of Irish education better than the right hon. Gentleman. I intended to ask him this Session to carry out the promise he had made to the National teachers; but as he has now resigned the Office, I trust that his Successor will do something in that direction. In Ireland, as I have pointed out, the average salary of a male teacher is £63, and of a female teacher £40; whereas the average salaries in England are £120 for a male and £73 for a female teacher. In Ireland the standard of education is higher than in England, and yet you will not give the teachers the same salary. In Ireland the passes in reading are 93·4 per cent; in England 91·9; and in Scotland 93·6. In writing in Ireland the percentage of passes is 95·8; in England 83·8; and in Scotland 91·5; while in arithmetic the percentage in Ireland is 80·7; England 79·7; and Scotland 87·5. I think that these statistics show that the Irish teacher is not behind his English brother in the power of imparting knowledge to his pupils, and I think he ought to receive the same remuneration. In Ireland you restrict the political freedom of the teacher and make him the slave of the State; in England the same restriction does not exist. Surely in Ireland, where he is so much under control, you ought not to make him depend upon the whim of the Guardians. The result of your present system is that you cannot induce young men of ability to enter a service for which you only offer such a miserable remuneration; and nevertheless, notwithstanding that fact, the standard of education in Ireland is higher than in England, and the results are much better. I have a Bill on this subject, which stands upon the Order Book for the 16th of March; but I do not believe it can be reached, because there are other matters which are likely to occupy the whole of the attention of the House. My Bill seeks to remedy the existing state of things, and I would ask the Government if they are prepared to afford any facilities for bringing on a discussion upon its provisions. Another point is that you do not allow assistants the same salary—you do not extend to them the same treatment as

you extend to persons in the same position in England. In all cases the salary in England and Scotland is much higher, and it seems marvellous that this should be the case, seeing that the results in Ireland are so very good. I will not detain the Committee much longer; but I make a final appeal to the Government to do something in this matter. The residences of the teachers in Ireland are miserable, in point of fact they are, if I may use the term, uninhabitable. The teachers are unable to study there, and yet they are expected to give good results from the miserable salary and accommodation afforded them. I hope the Government will give us some information on this subject, and hold out to the Committee some hope that before long something will be done for those very badly paid servants, who, for the salary they receive, yield such excellent results.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The Committee will perceive that there is an increase on several items in this Vote which is due to the laudable efforts of the teachers to improve their qualifications and become entitled to increased salary, as well as to the necessity of making a further provision on account of the salaries of monitors. The hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) has referred to the condition of the Irish National School teachers, and the position which my right hon. Friend the late Chief Secretary (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) took up with regard to it. I can assure hon. Members that my right hon. Friend has been working assiduously for some time on several matters, in fulfilment of his promise to attend to this subject. He has left the result of his work for his Successor, and I am certain that there will be no default in this matter on the part of my right hon. Friend the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour).

MR. MOLLOY (King's County): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has explained the reasons for the demand for a Supplementary sum under this Estimate, but he has scarcely addressed himself to the point to which my hon. Friend referred. He calls the increase which has taken place an automatic increase, but that is not the case, inasmuch as it is due to an effort on the

part of the teachers to attain a higher class of results. The sums, therefore, which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to as evidence of the fulfilment of the pledges of the Government, given on so many occasions, is no evidence of fulfilment at all.

MR. HOLMES: I did not say that they had been fulfilled, I said that my right hon. Friend, in fulfilment of his promise to carefully consider the subject, had been engaged diligently in trying to settle certain branches of it.

MR. MOLLOY: Exactly. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has admitted that pledges were given, and that they have not yet been fulfilled. No complaint has been made with reference to the increase of the Estimate; the complaint is that the increase which has occurred has not been occasioned by any benefit that has been done to the teachers beyond that which has been due to their own action. The reason of the increase was not the improved status of the National School teachers in Ireland; my desire is to impress upon the Committee that the improved status of the teachers is not due to any action of the Government, but to the exertions of the teachers themselves. The pledges have been made for so many years that I am becoming, I confess, a little sceptical on the subject of their fulfilment. The right hon. and learned Gentleman regrets that the Chief Secretary (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has resigned his position, and I can assure him that no one regrets that resignation more than we do. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has stated that the late Chief Secretary had prepared a Bill and made provision for an increase of the salaries of teachers in Ireland. The whole story has been gone into so often by my hon. Friends that I will not deal with it at length now; but I wish to point out that not only are the National School teachers in Ireland receiving little more than half the salaries received by the National School teachers in England, but that the latter have not done their work half so well. In many cases the Irish School teachers walk six or seven miles—Irish miles, which are considerably longer than English miles—to and from school; they cannot afford to take out of their small salaries a sum sufficient to provide them with comfortable lodgings, and the consequence is that, as a rule, they have to get lodg-

ings in the houses of the small farmers, very often at a considerable distance from the schools which they attend, and they have to take these long journeys in good weather and bad—in snow and rain. But yet in spite of all that, the results they have achieved have been better than the results produced by the school teachers in this country. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to a scheme which has been prepared by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland. I do not say it is a Bill which he has prepared.

MR. HOLMES: I said nothing about a Bill. I said that my right hon. Friend had been engaged on several matters connected with this subject.

MR. MOLLOY: I understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman to say that the late Chief Secretary, who took a great interest in the subject of education in Ireland, and who was undoubtedly well qualified in this respect, had made preparations for introducing a measure to deal with the case of the Irish National School teachers. If that is not the case, I am sorry for it. He said that the new Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) would take up the work where it had been left off by the late Chief Secretary. I point out to the Committee that the Government have again this year given us a pledge that the matter is in hand, and that preparations have been made to do what it would be a national grievance to leave undone. Well, Mr. Courtney, I hope these additional pledges will culminate in something more than they have during the last six years.

MR. H. J. GILL (Limerick): I wish to ask the Government for some information with regard to model schools.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member cannot discuss the question of model schools on this Vote.

MR. H. J. GILL: Am I not to understand that in this Vote provision is made for salaries connected with the teachers in model schools?

THE CHAIRMAN: Even if that were the case, it would not be in Order to discuss the organization of model schools in connection with this Vote.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary): In conjunction with my Colleagues, I desire to express my very great regret that the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) is not in a

sufficient state of health to be in his place, and state what he has done with regard to carrying out the good intentions which he had with reference to the National School teachers in Ireland. I believe that the late Chief Secretary possessed good intentions in that respect, but I certainly have a fear that the work which he left was not in a very advanced state; and I think, therefore, that it is very natural that we should seek for some information as to the items of this Vote. We have every reason to be satisfied with the explanation which the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Holmes) has given of the items. I cannot see, however, how the removal expenses in respect of new districts affect the general position of the National School teachers of Ireland. That the increased expenditure is the result of classification is a revelation to me, because I have always been under the impression that no matter what the classification might be, no augmentation of salaries would take place; and that a man who was a first-class teacher would only have the pay of a second-class teacher, according to the scale. The explanation of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, although candid and fair, does not appear to me to go to the root of the question. I do not wish to go at length into this matter, but I may point out that last year I happened to be in charge of the Bill which it was thought fit to bring forward to rectify the many grievances which this long-suffering class have to bear. At that time I entered pretty extensively into the question, and I have no desire whatever to repeat the speech I made on the occasion; but I propose to-night, by way of impressing upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of carrying out the intentions which I believe were possessed by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, to emphasize a few of the facts which have been already stated by my hon. Friend who has raised this question to-night. It is clear, from the figures which he has stated, that the National School teachers of Ireland are worse paid, although they produce better results, than their brethren in England and Scotland. The average pay of the National School teacher in Ireland is £57 9s. a-year, as compared with the much larger sum which has been shown by my hon. Friend to be the pay of the

teachers in England and Scotland. Without dwelling at length upon his figures I may say that they amount to a statement of facts which ought to weigh with Her Majesty's Government when they come to consider this question; and when they put into shape the proposals which they tell us the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary left in a crude state in the pigeon-holes at Dublin Castle or at the Irish Office. I also wish to point out as a matter of business that, when they bring forward their Bill, there should be in it a clause to compel landlords to give sites for buildings. I believe that in many cases no great amount of compulsion would be necessary; but there are others which render it desirable that some such clause as I have suggested should find a place in the proposal which they may bring forward. Now, the position of the National School teachers in Ireland has been for a long time considered a sort of last resort, and no one who can do anything else will take up the position of teacher. I can safely say that the position of the policeman is vastly superior to that of those persons to whose hands the education of the children of the country is entrusted. I have not the least wish to disparage the Irish policeman on the present occasion, but still I point out to the Committee that in point of remuneration, prospects, and pension the policeman is far beyond the National School teacher in Ireland; and that being so, I think the position and prospects of that deserving class merit all the attention which we are told so often that the Government are going to bestow upon it. As the Committee may have forgotten some of the facts bearing on this question, I shall briefly refer to a few of them, for the purpose of making the position of the National School teachers in Ireland as clear as possible to hon. Members. In 1878 a Resolution was brought forward in this House on the subject; that Resolution, which was unanimously passed, was to the effect that the National School Teachers of Ireland Act of 1875, and the other means adopted by the Government, having failed to satisfy the just demands of the Irish School teachers, the House was of opinion that the position of the Irish National School teachers called for the immediate attention of Her Majesty's Government with a

view to the satisfactory adjustment of their claims. As I have said, that Resolution was unanimously passed by the House, and it is almost unnecessary to point out to the Committee how little has been done to carry it into effect since then, that is to say, to enhance the position of the National School teachers of Ireland. There was, I believe, set aside the sum of £46,000 to improve their position, but it was made conditional that they should pay away £12,000 of that money in the shape of premiums to the pension fund. Again, the result fees having fallen from £20,000 to £15,000, there has been a loss in this way of £5,000, which, added to the £12,000 for premiums to the pension fund, represents a loss to the teachers of £17,000: so that out of the £46,000 I have mentioned as having been set aside for the purpose of improving their condition, they only get the benefit of £27,000. Beyond that I say that nothing has been done to carry out the Resolution which was agreed to by this House in 1878. Then, in 1883, the then Chief Secretary for Ireland stated in this House that he was strongly impressed with the statement made by a deputation which waited upon him in connection with this subject, that he thought immediate action ought to be taken by the Government, if possible, to increase the teachers' salaries, and he added that he recognized the pledges which had been given on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman who is now Member for the Stirling Boroughs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and he said that he recognized the pledge given in Parliament in 1875; that he admitted likewise that the measures taken by the Government in redemption of the pledge had been only of a temporary nature; and that he should be extremely glad to introduce a measure at once to deal with the subject. Such was the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1883, and we have to-night another statement from the right hon. and learned Attorney General. Why, Sir, this House passes a Resolution. Chief Secretary after Chief Secretary prepares or promises to prepare a Bill to deal with the matter in this House; but year after year passes away notwithstanding, and nothing is done whatever to improve the position of the Irish National School teachers in the slightest

degree. Although I am not one to fail in using every opportunity to bring forward the claims of this deserving class of men; yet I should prefer, if the Government will give us a positive assurance which we may convey to the National School teachers that something will be done to place them in the same position as their brothers in England and Scotland, to allow the matter to rest there for the present, and allow the Government to take the amount of this Supply Estimate. I should be anxious to postpone this discussion until the Main Estimates come forward, when I shall be again prepared to press upon the Government the consideration of these claims. I have reason to believe that the discussion which we had last year was fruitless, and I have reason to know that very few inquiries have been made as to the operation of the Act. I give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General every credit for his statement, and the late Chief Secretary every credit for his good intentions, but I am still unable to believe—taking into account the promises made to the National School teachers, and the entire absence of the results from those promises—that the measure intended by Government will go to anything like the extent to which the just necessities of the case demand. I have no desire, as I stated at first, to prolong the discussion of this question. I accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, but I ask how far the measure he has indicated is in a state of preparation? I should like to know what is contained in the measure the Government intend to propose;—whether they intend to increase the salaries of the National School teachers in Ireland; whether they intend to do anything to encourage the building of residences; whether it is their intention to provide for pensions—in short, whether they are going to bring forward a measure that will make the Irish National School teachers comfortable in their position? Will the Government make the position of this long-suffering class such that any man in the country may desire it; and will they relieve this Committee from the reproach of discussing this Vote year after year, and indeed twice a year, in order to force upon their attention the just demands of the National School teachers of Ireland?

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): May I be allowed to say in reply to what has fallen from the hon. Gentleman opposite, to whom I listened last year with very great pleasure, that there is a very strong impression now among hon. Members on this side of the House, that the condition of the National School teachers of Ireland is not satisfactory. Having heard the discussion which took place upon this question last year, I was very much struck with the reality of the grievances which the hon. Gentleman and his Friends put forward. It does seem to some of us on these Benches quite shocking that so useful a body of men, and doing their duty so efficiently, should, as the hon. Gentleman has pointed out, be in a position worse, both as regards salary and pension, than an ordinary policeman in Ireland. I remember the promise made to hon. Gentlemen opposite in this House, that something would be done in this matter; and I desire to say that if the Government will undertake the introduction of a Bill to deal in a liberal spirit with the National School teachers in Ireland, they will gratify a large number of Members who sympathize with the teachers, and especially those Members who are connected with the county in which is situated the borough I have the honour to represent.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): I am glad to hear the hon. Gentleman opposite saying these words with reference to this hardly-used and yet deserving class of public servants in Ireland; and I desire, also, to state my entire concurrence with the views put forward on this question by my Colleagues in the course of this discussion. This question has been often referred to in Committee, and I have been pleased when I found during each of the last two Sessions that assurances were given by the Representatives of the Government that something would be done in the very near future to ameliorate the condition of this most deserving class. I wish, together with my hon. Friend, to express regret that the right hon. Baronet who lately held the Office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has not been permitted, by the state of his health, to be present here this evening to state to the Committee the views which we had hoped he would have been able by this time to have put into

a practicable shape. I hope, nevertheless, that those right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench will take cognizance of what we on this side of the House say on the question of the Irish National School teachers. There are, on the part of these teachers, three great causes of complaint—first, as to salary; secondly, as to the want of residence; and, thirdly, with regard to the inadequacy of pension. The pensions, according to the present scale, are utterly insufficient for the purpose; and with regard to the salaries, it has been admitted over and over again, not only to-night but in former Committees, that in this respect the Irish National School teacher is far below the teacher in England, Wales, and Scotland. It is clearly admitted that the literary status of these men is, if anything, higher than that of their brethren in this country. Why, therefore, do you pay for a higher class of work in Ireland less than you pay for the work in this country? I do not know that the necessities of life are a bit cheaper in Ireland than anywhere else. I do not know that clothing is less expensive in Ireland than it is elsewhere. These men and women—the National School teachers of Ireland—have, in fact, just the same expenses as the teachers of England and Scotland. Why, therefore, should they not be paid at the same rate for the same work? But that, Sir, is not the entire grievance. I have already stated that one of the chief grievances of the Irish National School teachers is that they have very insufficient residential accommodation. In fact, in the greatest number of cases there are no residences at all. It has been stated already that some of the Irish teachers, especially the females, have to walk five miles to their schools—they have to do this in the morning and then to walk five miles back at night—that is, in the course of the day, 10 Irish miles, which, I suppose, are equivalent to 12 or 13 English miles. That is a labour in itself, and a labour quite sufficient for a man, but still worse for a woman. How can you expect proper respect to be paid to the teachers of the country, whether male or female, if their social and domestic status is of such a character? The last of the grievances of which they complain is that of insufficient pensions, or retirement allowances. Now, at present, retirement

allowances are given only at the ages of 60 years for females, and 65 for males.

THE CHAIRMAN: Such an expenditure can only be discussed on the Vote for the Teachers' Pension Fund.

MR. P. McDONALD: I will pass from that to another question—namely, the question of the monitors. I believe there are not sufficient so-called monitors; they are commonly assistant teachers, they do very good and useful work, and they go through a course of training which befits them for employment later on as teachers. I am aware that complaints have been made—and they are strong complaints—as to the illiberal manner in which the National Board of Education treat some of their managers in respect to monitors. I have had, within the last month or two, several letters from the very rev. gentleman the manager of one of the National Schools in Sligo, complaining of the action of the National Board in this respect. Although the rev. gentleman has communicated with the Board on the subject very often, he has not, as yet, received a satisfactory reply. He has shown—to his satisfaction at least, and I may add to mine—that his cause was a very good one. He has shown, by comparison with schools in the town and in the district, that he has equal claims, yet the National Board have not met him in the generous spirit in which they ought to have done. I certainly think that a little more liberality might have been expected from the National Board under circumstances of this nature. In conclusion, I appeal to the Government, as I have done on two previous occasions, to favourably consider the position of these hard-working but ill-paid public officials—for public officials they are. They are doing public duty in educating the people; and I believe, Sir, it will be conceded they are educating them in a right and proper direction, in the direction of making the rising youth of Ireland good members of society and a useful portion of the population of the British Empire.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): Mr. Courtney, I have great pleasure in supporting the cause of the National School teachers of Ireland. I consider that the question of educational teachers is one of very vital importance to the future of Ireland. The pay of the teachers is inadequate, the pensions

are inadequate, and there is not sufficient provision for residences. I trust that when the Government approach the question of residences they will not make it a question of house accommodation alone, but that they will go a little wider and give a garden or a small farm. I think there is one point that has not been alluded to in this House up to the present, but which has a most detrimental effect upon the interest of education, and that is that, though these National School teachers are paid servants of the State, they are really at the mercy of private individuals. Their pension and their salaries are not certain, because they can lose both at the arbitrary will of the manager, who is a private individual. I, therefore, trust that the Government will approach this question in a broad spirit, and I can only say that I shall give such action my most cordial support.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I desire, Mr. Courtney, to support what has been said in regard to the National School teachers of Ireland. Meetings of the teachers have been held from time to time, and deputations after deputations have waited upon the Government and State officials in Ireland, and I am happy to say that to-night I find more sympathy with the cause of the Irish teachers from Gentlemen representing English constituencies than I do from Irish Representatives sitting on the Conservative side. It is a fact that many teachers in Ireland have to travel six miles to school and six miles back again in the evening, and this in itself is justly considered a great grievance. I consider it a great loss to the children, because no person who has to travel six miles before commencing upon his duties can be considered in a fit state of health to do the work which a teacher is called upon to perform. On this account I consider that provision ought to have been made in this Supplementary Estimate for the erection of additional residences for teachers. I am afraid I should be trespassing upon the Rules of the Committee if I said anything about the condition of the schools themselves in Ireland. I do not wish to so trespass, and I am very sorry that I have not an opportunity of saying something about the schools, and the insufficient accommodation for the children which

they afford. We, of course, all regret the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); but we naturally expected that, if the right hon. Gentleman found his health would not permit him to be present, the regulations he has framed would have been put into the possession of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes), so that he could have communicated them to the House. If the Government want us to believe that good intentions are to do everything for Ireland—we have heard from time to time, and we are tired of hearing, of the good intentions towards Ireland—we should like to learn from a responsible Member of the Government that something is likely to be done, and done in the near future, in behalf of the poor children of Ireland. The children of Ireland have no chance whatever in the world unless they get a proper education, and it is impossible under the existing condition of things for an ordinary Irish child to be properly trained or educated. They are thrown on the world and come to England, and you blame them because they are ignorant. Who keeps them ignorant? Certainly not the Irish people, for many of them would almost starve themselves in order to give their children a good education. Unfortunately, this is not within their reach. The English Government hold the resources so closely in their own hands that they do not give the teachers and children of Ireland a fair chance. Now, with regard to the travelling expenses under this Vote, I think the sums set down for such expenses are rather high. I would much rather the Government had consulted some Irish Members with regard to the travelling expenses, and they might thus have been able to have seen a way of setting apart a portion of the sum taken for travelling expenses for the fund of the teachers. Now, with respect to the salaries of schoolmistresses in workhouses, I happen to be a member of a Poor Law Board, and I know a good deal about the position of workhouse schoolmistresses. Of all teachers in Ireland there is no worse-paid class than the teachers in the workhouses.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is nothing about such teachers in this Vote.

MR. O'HANLON: I must apologize to you, Mr. Courtney; I certainly thought that the workhouse schoolmistresses were provided for in this Vote. I suppose, at all events, they come under the head of teachers, and I must say that of all teachers in Ireland there is no class more miserably paid than the workhouse schoolmistresses. Something, too, I think, may be added to the Vote in respect of the monitors, for the purpose of giving the monitors a better chance of being trained, and of some day becoming schoolmasters. The whole future prospect of the Irish people depends upon education. You cannot expect anything from the industries or from any source in the country whatever, unless the education of the people is improved. There is nothing before many people now but emigration, unless it be to obtain a post in the Constabulary. The Constabulary is the only paying business in Ireland, and I am afraid that we have already got a sufficient number of that class of men in the country. I trust that some Gentleman on this side of the House will propose that this Vote be increased, because at present it is quite insufficient for the purposes of giving to the children of Ireland a good education, and for providing the teachers with proper remuneration.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I do not intend to occupy the attention of the Committee for many minutes. Firstly, because I do not wish to trespass upon your kind indulgence, Mr. Courtney, in having already allowed the discussion to travel rather wide of the limits of the Vote; and, in the second place, because I believe that there is a disposition to redress the grievances of which the Irish National School teachers complain. There have been a great many discussions in this House, both before the whole House and before the Committee, and representations have frequently been made to Her Majesty's Government on the occasions when they have been waited upon by deputations of Irish Members, and also deputations of the teachers themselves, so that if the matter has not been thoroughly understood up to now it has not been for the want of discussion. I should like to say a few words upon the subject of the difficulty the Government will find itself placed in in settling this question. It strikes me the difficulty arises from the fact that they will per-

haps meet with opposition in this House from English Members, who may think, looking at the proportion of money granted from the Imperial Treasury for educational purposes in Ireland, and the sum of money granted for like purposes in England, that Ireland has got an advantage already. Now, there is no parallel whatever between the position of National education in England and of National education in Ireland, and for this reason, that in England National education is under the control of local bodies who represent the people. Mr. Courtney, I will not follow that line of argument. Now, Sir, I have listened with interest to the statement, which was made by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) upon this extra Vote. With regard to the travelling expenses of Inspectors he pointed out that the additional sum of £400 arises from the fact that some changes have been made in the geographical boundaries of the districts. I should have been glad if he had been able to point out to the Committee that the changes which have been made will result in economy in this item of travelling expenses; because it certainly does strike anyone who knows anything at all about Ireland as remarkable that a sum of very nearly £12,000 should be required by the Inspectors of the Irish National Schools. It certainly would occur to one that if the Schools of Ireland are not over-taught they are at least over-examined. Now, upon the question of monitors, I must say that, although I have got a pretty fair acquaintance with the matter, I cannot agree with a remark that fell from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland—namely, that the extension of the monitorial system in Ireland is any very great advantage to the cause of education. Hon. Members of the Committee will be able to understand this better when they take into account the fact that monitors are appointed at a very tender age—at an age when they should be improving their own minds, and when they can give very little time with advantage either to themselves or to their fellow-pupils in the matter of education. It sometimes happens that in schools in Ireland where monitors are employed, that by the time the monitors reach the age at which they may be expected to

become teachers they are quite wearied out with the work they have been obliged to perform. I know, from many conversations I have had on the subject with schoolmasters in Ireland, that they would very much prefer to have the aid of properly qualified assistants. But this difficulty steps in, that the Board lays it down as a rule that there must be a high average attendance at a school in order that the services of an assistant may be secured. The condition of the country militates very greatly against a high average attendance, and for this reason, that in the agricultural districts, where these National Schools are mostly to be found, the number of children sent to school at one season of the year is not more than 30 or 40; while at another season of the year, when the work in the fields is at an end, the number of pupils sent daily to school runs up perhaps to 100 or more. Therefore, the staff which is fully adequate to meet the requirements of a school at one time of the year is much too small to meet the requirements at another. I think that in any scheme for improving National education in Ireland which Her Majesty's Government may frame this system of averaging the attendance ought to be looked into, so as to allow of an assistant being appointed for the higher attendances at least. Now, Sir, with regard to the position of the teachers throughout the country, I have only to unite with my hon. Friends upon these Benches in saying that the position of the teachers is anything but satisfactory; and that I am sure that the teachers in Ireland, as well as the bulk of the people in that country, will be very much pleased when they learn that hon. Members opposite fully recognize the situation, and unite with the Representatives of Irish constituencies in urging upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity for improving the present state of things.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

(3.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £16,785, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day

of March 1887, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions abroad.”

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): We have already voted a sum, as you will see, of £12,000 for telegrams for the Diplomatic Services, and we are now called upon to Vote an additional sum of £7,800. I do not quite understand how these Supplementary Estimates are arranged, because these charges are only, as hon. Gentlemen will see, no doubt, for the telegrams coming in from Foreign Legations and Missions abroad to this country, but for every telegram which comes in we may fairly suppose that another goes out. We did vote £12,000 last year, and, if I remember right, we voted some Supplementary sum. How is it that in the Supplementary Estimates in this House we are asked to vote £7,800, in addition to what we have already voted for the telegrams coming in, and nothing for the telegrams going out? If anyone looks through the recent Blue Books, especially that in regard to Bulgarian affairs, they will see that there has been a very vast number of telegrams from the different Ministers abroad. I presume, therefore, that, in point of fact, we shall have to pay at some time or other an additional sum of some £7,000 or £8,000 for telegrams from the Foreign Office to Missions abroad. Now, last year, when this question of telegrams was raised on the Estimates, there was an animated discussion, and my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), who was then Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, admitted that reductions ought to be made in these Estimates. That was the feeling entirely in the House; but, instead of any reduction taking place in consequence of such a general expression of opinion, we find that there has been no reduction; and, indeed, we very often find that even when the House does express its opinion strongly upon excessive expenditure the amounts are the same, if not more. I am inclined to think that this Vote is rather more than the Vote submitted last year. Now, I do think that £12,000 is quite sufficient for telegrams to the Foreign Office without the addition of £12,000 for telegrams from the Foreign Office. The system, at present, seems to be that every Minister of Foreign Affairs, and every man in the Foreign Office, and every Foreign

Minister thinks that when he has got some very foolish information to transmit that he might very well send through the Post Office, he must send it in a cypher telegram, and telegrams in cypher cost more than ordinary telegrams. I think there ought to be a protest made against the cost of these telegrams. I do not think that the country gains any advantage by the spending of something like £30,000 per annum for telegrams from our Foreign Legations to the Foreign Office, and I wish to accentuate the view many hon. Members of the House entertain upon this point by moving the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £3,000, which I hope will bring home, not only to the Foreign Office, but also to Foreign Ministers, that they must do their best to send their communications through the post or by Queen's Messenger, except where it is absolutely necessary that they should be sent by telegraph. At present, Representatives abroad send many telegrams which they might very well send through the post or by Queen's Messenger. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £3,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £7,800 (Telegrams), be reduced by the sum of £3,000."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Mr. Chairman, I must, of course, give the Committee some explanation of the reason of this additional expenditure. The sum expended upon telegrams for the Diplomatic Services is about £19,800, and the main items are for telegrams in regard to Egypt, China, Japan, and Persia. For instance, the charge in respect of China and Japan is £7,765; the cost of telegrams from Cairo £4,200, and other places £7,835, making a total of upwards of £19,000. This is a very large sum, and all I can say is that great efforts have been made to induce Her Majesty's Representatives abroad to curtail their telegrams as much as possible. Within my knowledge exception has been taken to telegrams unnecessarily long, and a Circular has been addressed to Her Majesty's Representatives abroad calling upon them to use the greatest economy practicable in the

writing of telegrams. But, Sir, it must be remembered, when important matters have to be brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government, the Representatives naturally wish to be perfectly distinct, because a little undue shortening of a telegram may lead to serious misconception. The Government are well aware of the importance of not exceeding the Original Estimate in the matter of telegrams, as in everything else; but this Supplementary Estimate has been absolutely necessary. The only effect of the hon. Member's (Mr. Labouchere) Amendment would be to cause a certain amount of embarrassment, because if expenditure is incurred, it has to be paid. Therefore, I hope that the Committee will not consent to the proposed reduction.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): It appears to me, Mr. Courtney, that this is simply a matter of common sense. Practically speaking, when Her Majesty's Government get into a mess, as they appear to have got into a mess on the question which has necessitated this item being brought forward for our consideration, they at once take the most expensive mode, at the cost of the unfortunate taxpayer, of solving the question. Now, Sir, it is not for me at the present time to raise the point as to how this item was incurred. We all know very well how it was incurred—namely, in connection with Prince Alexander of Bulgaria—in trying to keep his Highness upon his Throne. We have got a sort of answer from the right hon. Gentleman (Sir James Fergusson), who adorns the post he now fills. But I think the right hon. Gentleman, taking into account that his words go before the country, and taking into account that the country carefully examine all these items of expenditure, will admit that at least an item of this character ought to be satisfactorily explained. Up to the present it has not been explained; and, therefore, as a Member occupying a seat in the quarter of the House I do, and regretting deeply that there is not more independence of spirit shown among Members on the Ministerial Benches—and there are many hon. Members in that quarter of the House who ought to know something, at any rate, about Eastern affairs—I desire to enter my protest against this expenditure, and to express the pleasure I shall

Mr. Labouchere

have in going into the Lobby with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere).

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Will the right hon. Gentleman say how much of this item is due to Egyptian telegrams?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: In the year, the telegrams from the British Agency at Cairo will reach a sum of £4,200.

DR. TANNER: How much money was spent upon telegrams in connection with the Bulgarian business, directly or indirectly?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I am afraid I cannot tell the hon. Member. I really do not know how much was expended in this way.

DR. TANNER: How much was spent on telegrams to Constantinople? How much was spent on telegrams to Sofia?

MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman has only referred to telegrams in, and said nothing about telegrams out.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I understand there is no excess over the money taken for telegrams out; such telegrams are very much shorter than those which come in.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 91; Noes 140: Majority 49.—(Div. List, No. 43.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I believe that an Amendment is likely to be moved upon this Vote, and certainly it does seem to me to require some sort of supervision in order to justify this very large payment. I see my hon. Friend (Mr. Bradlaugh), who is going to move the Amendment, has just entered the House, so that I will resume my seat.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): In opposing this Vote for a Supplementary Grant to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Special Mission to Constantinople and Egypt, I would remind the Committee that when I opposed a similar Vote last year, I pointed out that then the first Mission to Constantinople had been utterly worthless, and that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had failed in every respect upon which he had received instructions, and had only succeeded on the points on which his instructions dif-

fered. I was then told that his success at Cairo would make up for what he had not succeeded in at Constantinople. I, therefore, want, before the Committee pass this Vote, to have some information as to why this Supplementary Estimate is submitted to us at all. There have, no doubt, been special expenses in connection with the festive scenes which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has held at Cairo, but which ought hardly to become a charge against the country; and I should like the Member of the Government answerable for this Vote to distinguish between the various branches of expenditure which make the excess now asked for as a Supplementary Vote. We have been told that telegrams from Cairo cost something like £4,200, and the absolute want of any kind of necessity for this Mission is shown when we come to explain what has happened at Cairo during the past year. This country has been well represented, both at Constantinople and at Cairo, by eminent gentlemen. One of these, occupying a high position in the Diplomatic Service, has been kept ignorant, as I will show from Blue Books, of negotiations which have made this country responsible for the payment of an exceedingly large sum of money. In the debate on the Address I put several Questions to the Government with reference to the charges put upon this country by the occupation of Suakin. Suakin being quitted by British troops, the Representative of England there made this country liable to pay a sum—I am not certain—but a sum, apparently, of £73,000 a-year; I do not know for how many years. I do not know for what term; but so long as it lasts a sum of about £73,000 a-year is to be paid to the Egyptian Government, for the government of a city with which we had no concern whatever, and for which the British taxpayer is to remain liable; and I shall be able to show that this was done without the knowledge of Sir Evelyn Baring, and that it was done on the suggestion of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. This is shown by Papers No. 24 in the Book Egypt, No. 5, of last year. It is in these Papers that we find one of the earliest despatches from Lieutenant General Stephenson relating to the evacuation of Suakin, and there is a phrase in them which, by itself, would not be complete, where he speaks of what he is putting to

the Government there as "suggested by Wolff." When I come to look at a later despatch, we find Sir Evelyn Baring sending home for instructions in solution of this matter, as one of which he is entirely ignorant, when it is communicated to him by Lieutenant General Stephenson. Now, at first, the government of Suakin is to cost England £40,940. The item keeps growing. Then there is to be £5,000 for some kind of equipment for the Egyptian troops. Why the British taxpayer should pay for the equipment of Egyptian troops is by no means clear to me, and I should like some information to be given to the Committee on that subject. But if we turn to a later Paper in the same Book—No. 6—we find Sir Evelyn Baring saying this—"General Stephenson informs me that the expenses of this Force"—that is, the Force which is to occupy Suakin after the British troops have quitted, the Egyptian Force—"to the extent of £56,440, are to be met by Her Majesty's Government." Why is the British taxpayer to pay any of that charge, in addition to £5,000, for the first payment? Then Sir Evelyn Baring uses this remarkable language—

"I have received no instructions on this subject from your Lordship, and have ventured to telegraph to your Lordship for authority."

That was a despatch to Lord Rosebery; but the previous despatch to which I have referred was a despatch to the right hon. Gentleman who is the present Leader of the House, but was at that time the Secretary of State for War. It is clear upon whom the responsibility for this transaction lies, and who is to blame, because Lieutenant General Stephenson's term, "suggested by Wolff," becomes quite clear by the light of the declaration of Sir Evelyn Baring, that he knew nothing of it, and that he was not acquainted with it by his colleagues. You have one official Representative of Great Britain negotiating one state of things, and you have another in another place negotiating another state of things, and you have the accord between the two so complete that they know nothing of what each other is doing. And we get a little worse as we go on. The money claimed by Egypt is constantly increasing. We find in that same Blue Book that the Egyptian demands keep increasing step by step, until at last we get the figures "£56,440,

plus such portion of £16,640, now demanded by the Egyptian Government," of which, up to that moment, £11,000 was admitted by us. But that is not enough. The Egyptians not only want us to pay for their men, but they want us to furnish them with stores, and we absolutely give them two sets of stores, one £9,325, and another £6,078, and another untotaled lot with no price put to them, which may be larger or smaller; and we have a modest demand for new stores to be supplied by us to the Egyptian Government at a price of £14,660. I should like the Representative of the Government to say why £15,000 worth of property of the British taxpayer was handed over to the Egyptian Government without the Government being asked to pay for it. I want to know how much of this £14,660 has been granted. It is true that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff achieved some success. At first, he seems to have been the chief negotiator of that blockade which injured a lot of unfortunate people and did no good to anyone—a blockade which had ultimately to be abandoned under pressure from the German Government when it was found to interfere with German trade. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff paid no attention to the starving inhabitants of the Soudan; but the moment two German traders remonstrated against the unfairness of this blockade, then Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who had insisted on the blockade in the first place, when it was suggested that it should be raised, thought that no great difficulties would result from its abandonment. I do not know that I have any right, in dealing with the salary of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, to refer to the efficient manner in which that blockade was carried out under his direction. We sent a steam cutter carrying a Gatling gun without the Gatling. We sent another whose guns were utterly untrustworthy, because they brought down the bow so much that they could not be used. That is part of the general efficiency of the whole of our dealings in this unfortunate country. What does Sir Henry Drummond Wolff do either in Cairo or in Constantinople for us? I can understand what was done by the Government which sent him out, for him. I can understand that an efficient provision

was made for every member of that gallant Army—not for the rank and file, for there was no rank and file—but for the whole of the commanding officers who put the late Chancellor of the Exchequer into Office. But I ask this Committee not to be a party to voting away the money of the British taxpayer on any ground of that kind; and I want to know from the Government, if we are to accept a certain burden of £56,440 a-year for Suakin, are there any other places we are going to accept the same certain burden for? If not, Sir, why is an exception made in the case of Suakin? If there are other places, where are they? I ask whether it is not a monstrous thing to commit the country by way of a number of engagements with reference to the Government of Egypt carried on at a cost to the British taxpayer at home? If you are not going to do that, then the language of these despatches has no meaning at all. If it be taken from that language that, though the British Government say they are to undertake these expenses, you do not mean it, it is a pity you said it.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): For that particular year. There is no particular obligation on us this year in that respect.

MR. BRADLAUGH: There is no limitation on you as to any year. The expression is “£56,440 per annum;” and there is another statement, either in this Book or in the Book which succeeded it, showing your obligations to pay. It is an extraordinary thing that, if it is a payment for that one year, there is nothing in the Book to show it. Where is the explanation of it? Why should the obligation be taken for that year at all?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Will the hon. Member give me that page to which he refers?

MR. BRADLAUGH: I thought I had given the right hon. Gentleman the numbers of the despatches, but I shall have great pleasure in referring to them again. The case is sufficiently clear—unfortunately too clear—and there is, therefore, no reason why I should conceal any part of it. My first suggestion is that Paper No. 24 shows not an expenditure for one year, but an annual

expenditure of £40,940. Now, “annual” does not mean a payment for one year, or a whole payment that is to terminate at the end of the year. The annual payment of £40,940 means a payment which is intended to go on for a much longer period; and I say, further, that this Paper No. 24 shows that this was “suggested by Wolff.” The curtness of that phrase is not mine. It is in the telegraphic enclosure. Then I say that the demand increased to a sum of £56,440, and that there is nothing in No. 60 which mentions the increase, limiting it to one year, and that Sir Evelyn Baring is certainly startled by the proposition to take on this country any such liability. He knew nothing of it, and he says, as I already read—

“I have received no instructions on this subject from your Lordship, and have ventured to telegraph to your Lordship for authority.”

There is nothing there which shows that the sum is limited to one year. Well, we go on still further, and we find that “the yearly liabilities incurred by Her Majesty’s Government amount, therefore, to £56,440,” plus such portion of the £16,640 now demanded. “Yearly liabilities” do not mean one year’s liability, and nothing more. Yearly liabilities mean—that is, if diplomatic language has any meaning—yearly liabilities. I have learned from an hon. Gentleman occupying a diplomatic position, now on the same Bench with the right hon. Gentleman, that a march may be conducted without opposition when you kill the people who stand in your way. I am quite prepared, therefore, to learn that annual liabilities do not mean annual liabilities, but only mean one specific payment, made in full, of all liabilities. But if your contract with the Egyptian Government is to pay an annual sum of £56,440, and you have no document specially limiting it to one year, I am afraid we shall have the same demand on the British taxpayer for this money another year. I think the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has given the Committee the strongest reason for rejecting the Vote. He says our special Representative, whom we sent on a special mission, is absolutely ignorant of the English language. This gentleman is well versed in other languages. He can talk French and Italian to the

representatives of those Nationalities with the greatest fluency; but when he comes to use his own language, and wishes to make a payment of £56,440 in full of everything, he agrees to pay it yearly. Now, I am not a householder; I am only a lodger; but I dare say there are some Gentlemen on the Front Bench who take house property by the year, and I put it to them, if they agree to pay a yearly rent—unless the place be taken for one year alone—they will find themselves burdened with more than one year's liability. If the thing went on from year to year, it would be quite clear that they would have to pay yearly; and it is evident, from the language I have quoted, that this payment is to go on in that way. It says, "the yearly liabilities incurred by Her Majesty's Government;" and, adding the two sums referred to together—that is to say, the £56,440 and the £16,640—it amounts to £73,080. I admit part of this expenditure was not assented to by Her Majesty's Government. The English Government, at that time, only conceded the £56,000 and £11,000—that was £67,000; and I would ask now, where is the despatch limiting that payment to one year? Does it only exist in the hopes of the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs? Is it what he thinks Sir Henry Drummond Wolff ought to have done? Is it what he thinks a wise man would have done? If the Representative of Her Majesty's Government has made this country responsible for a large sum of money per year, we ought to have further information in regard to it. I want to know why we take this obligation in regard to Suakin at all? What distinguishes Suakin that the English taxpayer should pay for its government? What has the English Government to do with it? Why should we relieve the Egyptian Government of this cost? Why, I repeat, should we find the Egyptian troops with ammunition and arms, and transfer stores to them? These things have been done by a courteous diplomatist to please the people with whom he is in contact, without the slightest regard to the taxpayer at home, whom he ought to have represented. I, therefore, hope we shall mark our sense of this outrageous Mission from beginning to end. It

would be an impertinence to go over the ground that I went over last year; but anyone who refers to *Hansard* will see that I took, step by step, and item by item, the instructions given to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff; and I showed that he had succeeded in nothing except in inducing this country to recognize the Sultan of Turkey as the spiritual chief of the Mahommedans. I am sure I congratulate the Government on the proud successes achieved. What is our position in relation to this Mission now? How long is it to last, and what is Sir Henry Drummond Wolff there for? Is Sir Evelyn Baring incapable; or has Sir William White no ability? Does the Government trust them? Or is it necessary that a third person should go to these places for the purpose of making a job or providing a place for a devoted adherent of a Chief who, I am bound to say, took the highest pains to reward everyone who was faithful to him? I do not know that there has been anything much more monstrous, as far as modern politics are concerned, than this Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. What has he done with Moukhtar Pasha? What has he done with anybody else that gives him any sort of claim on this country? What advantage has he gained for us? What difficulty has he relieved? What Treaty has he made—what bargain—that advantages this country at all? It is easy to give away money and to give away stores. Any idiot could do that; and it would not be necessary for us to employ a skilled Representative for that purpose. I trust that, without reference to politics, there will be found men on both sides of this House to record their votes against this allowance as a monstrous thing right through. I say Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has not represented the honour of England. I say, if you read the despatches with reference to the trade in the Soudan, you will find that delay took place in the settlement of the question because it did not suit Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to attend to it. He occupied himself with receiving and attending upon distinguished personages, when he ought to have been occupying himself with matters affecting the welfare of the poor and hungry Soudanese. He had no sort of consideration for the Soudanese; they were barbarians, of course;

an inferior race to us. It was only when the Germans said "We won't have it"—when two German traders, backed up by the German representatives, remonstrated, and stated that the blockade was destroying their trade, that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff found it convenient to think that the opening up of trade would pacify the Soudanese. It would have been much better never to have closed the Soudan at all; never to have fought a battle in it; and never to have gone into it for the purposes for which we did go into it. That, however, is a much wider question than that we have tonight a right to deal with. The questions I want the right hon. Baronet to answer are these—and I want him to answer them from beginning to end, not in vague words, nor in hopes or expectations, but in plain words—What advantage has Sir Henry Drummond Wolff gained, either from the Sultan or the Viceroy of Egypt, in exchange for the money we have paid him? Explain the exact cost of the festivities and balls, and how much of it is to be borne by the British taxpayer; say what is the real engagements with reference to Suakin, and where it will be found in black and white. Do not tell me that liabilities do not mean liabilities, and that "annual payments" mean one payment in one 12 months in full of everything. I shall be bound, even if you do tell me these things, to believe that the English language means what it says. I ask the Committee to vote against this Vote. I shall challenge a Division on it, trusting that Members on both sides of the House, remembering the misery that now prevails in the country and the pledges they gave to the working-class voters who returned them, will not permit themselves to be parties to this gross and wanton extravagance.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £7,000 (Special Missions and Services) be reduced by the sum of £6,190."
—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*.)

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock): Mr. Courtney, I object to the continuation of this Mission, and so strong is the objection I have to it that I shall protest against this Vote on every occasion, in the House and out of the House, until the burden of cost on account of it is removed from the Estimates. A fortnight ago I put a Question in the House

with regard to this Mission, and I asked whether the Government would consider the propriety of bringing it to an end. The answer I received was not satisfactory. The First Lord of the Treasury, at any rate, gave me no reason to believe that the Government had any intention to bring the Mission to a close. The reason he did give was that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was conducting very difficult and delicate negotiations. I find by the Blue Book, however, that, speaking figuratively, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is doing very little of what is characterized by the First Lord of the Treasury as delicate and difficult. On the contrary, I find that he has been doing work which ought to have been done by Sir Evelyn Baring in Egypt and our Representative at Constantinople, and who are quite willing and qualified to do the work that is placed in their hands. Among other things, it would seem that he has been endeavouring to upset that which had been previously accomplished, and was recently exerting himself to procure the re-opening of the trade with the Soudan. I find an absurd mixing up in this Blue Book of the details of matters that ought to be dealt with by our Representatives in Egypt. I find that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff deals with military events, and with questions of trade; in short, I find nothing in this Blue Book which bears out the character given to the Mission by the First Lord of the Treasury. There has, on the other hand, been a supersession of our agents in Egypt; and I think it must be felt by them to be something like attaching a stigma upon them in the discharge of their duties. Coming to the work on which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is at present engaged. What have we, to use the words of the First Lord of the Treasury, that is delicate and difficult in the negotiations at Constantinople? Is it not the fact that we have a most able Ambassador in the person of Sir William White? We know that we have in him an able man, and that he can accomplish those duties which you have sent out a second-rate man to discharge. The thing, to my mind, is perfectly monstrous, and I trust that the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff will be brought to an end without delay. When we find, even by the Conservative news-

papers, that there is a suspicion of jobbery attached to the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, I think it is high time that Liberals and Radicals should lift up their voices to protest against its continuance. Any man who has to face his constituents and confess that he has recorded his vote in support of this monstrous and costly Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has, I think, an imminent chance of losing his seat. I am told that there are numbers of Tory Democrats among the working classes, and I appeal to every Member of the House to resist this Vote, which it is my intention to protest against until this iniquitous charge is removed from the taxpayers of the country.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I think that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has been rather severe on Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. The policy of the present Government is not their policy alone; it was the policy of the late Government, who could, if they had chosen, supersede the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. Her Majesty's Government are carving out what is called a continuous foreign policy, and they have continued the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to Egypt and Constantinople; and I think, therefore, it is rather unfair to charge upon them all the delinquencies which are alleged to have occurred. It strikes me very forcibly that the charges alluded to by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) as having been incurred at Suakin, and which we are now asked to approve of, are a legacy of the Liberal Party, of which I am myself a Member. My hon. Friend behind me who has just spoken rather threw out a threat with regard to the charge for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's salary, because he said that Liberal and Radical Members who confessed to their constituents that they had voted for this Estimate would run the chance of losing their seats. But is it not a fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was in the habit of sending mission after mission, at any amount of expense, to inquire into the state of affairs in Egypt? And is it not also a fact that, in season and out of season, the hon. Member (Mr. Williamson) always voted for the demands—right or wrong—of the right hon. Gentle-

man the Member for Mid Lothian? He, therefore, should be the last man to taunt those who do not object to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's trivial expenses. On one occasion he sent out Lord Northbrook; at another time he sent out the right hon. Gentleman who is now Chancellor of the Exchequer to Constantinople with regard to Egyptian affairs. He also sent Lord Dufferin to inquire into Egyptian affairs, and a Report was made, and, with regard to the necessity there was thought to be of acting on that Report, I may remark that it was allowed to remain for a considerable time in the pigeon-holes of the Foreign Office. Again, the Liberal Government sent out General Gordon. He sent home certain recommendations as to what he thought necessary for the government of the Soudan; but not one of those recommendations did the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian carry out. They neglected to carry out the recommendation which General Gordon gave with regard to Suakin; and instead thereof they sent fire and sword amongst the poor and innocent Arabs, or, as I should rather describe them in the words of the late Prime Minister, as a people struggling to be free. Again, the Government of Mr. Gladstone rejected his advice with regard to sending Zebehr Pasha for the purpose of putting an end to the rebellion in that country; and then, as the House is aware, although urged to send relief to save their own agent, they did so when too late. We find among the Members who supported the policy of the late Government my hon. Friend behind me, who gets up now and cavils at the money spent by the present Government on the mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. The next question asked is whether Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has done anything at all? The hon. Member for Northampton has laid before the Committee evidence which, to his mind, shows that what has been done does not amount to very much. I find in the Blue Book that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff supplies the Government with a large amount of valuable information with regard to the position of Egypt, the financial position of the country, and that not only with regard to the condition of the Soudan provinces, and also the present Egyptian frontier. Having said thus much, I

come to the Mission itself. I am bound to say that I do not agree with the policy of which he is the exponent at Constantinople on the part of our Government. The policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government has, to my mind, the appearance of establishing a dual control with Turkey on Egyptian affairs. Now, if that is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, it is entirely opposed to the policy followed by the Governments of the Great Powers for the last 40 years with regard to Turkey and Egypt, which has been to secure the autonomy of Egypt and lessen the power of Turkey, which, I believe, was also the policy of the late Lord Palmerston. I am of opinion that the adoption of this policy will, sooner or later, lead the country into difficulty. The dual control which existed between this country and France with regard to Egypt was terminated by the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party after the war, and yet we find a dual control being attempted to be set up again with regard to Egyptian affairs. What I would suggest to the Government is that, instead of carrying out a policy of dual control with Turkey in respect of Egypt, we should confer with France, not in order that there might be a dual control, but in order that she might have a voice with regard to her interests in Egypt, which are larger than our own. It was not England, but France, which constructed the Suez Canal; then, again, France has much more capital invested in manufactures in Egypt, and, in other respects, a larger pecuniary stake than we have in the country. France has, moreover, three times the number of her own people in Egypt than we have, and hence I think that the wisest policy for this country will be, in some measure, to confer with France with regard to the future of Egypt. When we had differences with the proprietors of the Suez Canal, and when the entire country rejected the arrangement between the two Governments, the French yielded to the susceptibilities of British opinion, and gave up almost everything that we demanded regarding its control. In a like spirit we ought, in place of playing with the Turk, to meet, as far as possible, the just susceptibilities of France with regard to the future of Egypt. When we went to Egypt, the plea on which we went there was that of the Suez Canal. I

think it is now agreed that the Suez Canal is not the highway to India. I think it has been concluded that the defence of a line of 6,000 miles between this country and her Indian Possessions would, in case of war, be an act of lunacy. It was once contended that the high road to India was round the Golden Horn; but no one would now be so foolish as to say that. I hold that, in the event of war, the highway to India would not be through Egypt, but the old road round the Cape of Good Hope. Having said thus much, I should like to ask Her Majesty's Government a question with regard to the future of the Soudan. In my opinion, the present condition of the Soudan is a disgrace to any civilized Power. Judging from the Reports sent home by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, whose information is based on the Reports procured by the Special Commissioners sent from Cairo; judging from those Reports, and the statements of General Stephenson, we find that the number of insurgents between Wady Halfa and Dongola amounts to 11,000 men, the majority of them being armed only with spears. General Stephenson states, so far as Wady Halfa is concerned, that the town is sufficiently strong to resist attack; but that the insurgents may pass along the left bank of Wady Halfa, in which event it would be necessary to send up a flying column to prevent them reaching Assouan. If there is any danger of this insurrection passing down from the Soudan to Wady Halfa, I think it would be a wiser and cheaper policy to stop it at Wady Halfa than to have to send a force from Assouan up the Nile.

THE CHAIRMAN: I point out to the hon. Member that he is travelling somewhat widely from the Vote before the Committee.

MR. GOURLEY: I shall not pursue the subject, Mr. Courtney, further, but will content myself with expressing the hope that the Government will make clear to this House and the country what is the position of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff at the present moment, and what their policy. I hope they will state whether it is part of their policy or instructions that he should endeavour to bring about a new arrangement with regard to Egypt in the shape of an International neutral policy for the purpose of facilitating the return of the British troops which are in that country.

I quite think that the time has come when decisive action ought to be taken by the Government with regard to the occupation of Egypt.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): An appeal was made to the First Lord of the Treasury last Session by several Members of this House to state why Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had been sent out to Egypt, what he had done there, and what he was expected to do there. To that Question the usual answer was received—that he was sent out on important and delicate business. Well, Sir, one important Question which was asked then has been asked again to-night, in very forcible language, by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). That Question was not answered then, it has not been answered to-night, and I venture to say that it cannot be answered. It is this:—Is Sir Evelyn Baring able to do his business or not? He receives a salary of £5,000 a-year; he is not there as the special Representative of Her Majesty's Government only, but is supposed to be an experienced and able diplomatist. I would, however, point out that General Gordon entertained a different idea of his ability in that respect. But, however that may be, Sir Evelyn Baring has resided in Egypt since the commencement of these negotiations, and if he is able to do the work at all he ought to be able to carry it out by this time. We are now building a palace for him, and notwithstanding the fact that we are called on to pay £5,000 a-year we are also called upon to send out this other diplomatist, and to pay for his maintenance in Egypt and Constantinople. No attempt has been made since Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was sent out to Egypt to reply to the question why both these gentlemen should be kept in Egypt at the same time. It seems to me to be perfectly plain that either Sir Henry Drummond Wolff or Sir Evelyn Baring should come back to this country. Which of them should return is a matter for the Government to decide, although I believe there are many men in this country, and probably a still greater number in Egypt, who think that both should come back. I only allude to Sir Evelyn Baring in connection with this question incidentally, and because I think the time has come when we should require that a distinct

pledge should be given that either one or other of the salaries now being paid to these gentlemen should cease, and that one or the other of them should return to this country. We have asked over and over again the question—What is the Government doing in Egypt? It is very hard to find, after all the despatches which have been sent, what it is that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is doing. It cannot be that he is in Egypt for the purpose of sending home information, because you have your Agents there already for that purpose. We are told that he is conducting delicate and difficult negotiations. What are those negotiations? It is stated in *The Times* to-day in a telegram that the Porte has again urged on Sir Henry Drummond Wolff that a definite date should be fixed for the withdrawal of the English troops from Egypt. If that is true I am not surprised at it, in view of what has occurred during the last few years. I do not wonder that the Porte should be getting impatient with the continuance of English troops in Egypt. This question has been raised over and over again; and if the Government are prepared to say that their object in keeping Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in his present position, and in paying him on an exceedingly high scale in that position, is to bring about an arrangement that on a specified day which shall be named the British troops shall be withdrawn, I certainly should not vote against the payment of his salary. But when we look back on the history of this question I may be pardoned for asking that some specific statement should be made with regard to it. So long ago as February, 1883, the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) spoke in this House, in reply to a Question as to how long we were going to remain in the occupation of Egypt, to this effect—

“I would say, without venturing to speak with absolute assurance, that the right hon. Gentleman, in the first period of time he suggested, has stated with probable accuracy the length of time that it may be necessary to keep our troops in Egypt.”—(3 *Hansard*, [276] 123.)

That period, as stated by the late Lord Iddesleigh, then Sir Stafford Northcote, was six months. That was the 15th of February, 1883. Since then four years have elapsed, and instead of getting nearer to the withdrawal of the British troops we are infinitely further away

from that end than we were in the month of February, 1883. So far as anyone who has studied the history of these different transactions can arrive at a conclusion, our progress in the direction of that object, which has been declared to be the aim of all Ministers, both Conservative and Liberal, when in Office—namely, to get the British troops out of Egypt as soon as possible, has been backward instead of forward, and as time rolls by the accomplishment of that end appears to become more and more hopeless. On the 10th of August, 1883, a Question was put by my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) to the then First Lord of the Treasury, the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. John Morley) asked what chance there was that the Government would carry out the pledge given by the noble Lord the Member for Rosendale (the Marquess of Hartington) early in that Session, and the reply of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian extends over three pages of *Hansard*. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that their intention to evacuate Egypt in the autumn of 1883 was interrupted by the advent of cholera, which somewhat delayed the re-organization of the Egyptian Army. Well, the cholera came and went, and still the British Army remained there, and in that year the famous Mission of Lord Dufferin was sent out; and I was greatly surprised to hear an hon. Gentleman just now justifying the present Government in continuing to waste money on the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, on the ground that previous Governments have sent expensive Missions to report and give advice, and that they never acted on a particle of the advice given. It is a fact, Sir, that every single one of the Missions to Egypt have ended in smoke, and how that can justify this Government in continuing the present Mission I am at a loss to understand. Why, Sir, is not anyone, who has made a study of Egyptian affairs, perfectly aware of this—that Lord Dufferin went to Egypt and produced a most valuable and detailed Report as the result of his exertions, and that, no doubt, this Committee was called upon to vote large sums for his support? Not one single part of that Report has been acted upon. Lord

Dufferin went and came, and when his Report was thrown into the waste-paper basket Lord Northbrook was sent to Egypt. I have studied his Report; it is a most interesting document; and if it had been acted upon it would have resulted, unquestionably, in great relief to the taxpayers of Egypt. Lord Northbrook also had to be paid for; but not one single representation which he made has been acted upon. Are we to be told that, because money was wasted on Lord Dufferin's Mission, and money was wasted on the still more sad and fatal Mission of General Gordon, we are to waste money on a fourth Mission? If the Member of the Government who is to defend this Mission is able to stand up and say that the Mission will be of any good to Egypt or to England, there will be some ground for asking the Committee to adopt this Vote. Unless that can be done, it is a scandal and shame that the evils of your administration of Egypt, which are evils crying to Heaven for vengeance, can be hidden behind these Missions. We know what the object of sending Missions to Egypt is. It is that you are able to say that you cannot give Parliament any information about Egypt until such and such a Mission has come to a close. What about Lord Dufferin's Report; what about Lord Northbrook's Report; and what about General Gordon's Mission? The result of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission will be just the same as that of the foregoing Missions. If he makes a single recommendation which is of benefit to the people, as soon as his Report is received you will send out another Commissioner. I cannot understand how the people of England submit to this kind of thing. So long as they do, the real and only true explanation of these Missions is to be found in the fact that this House undertakes to govern a country like Egypt, and will not take the trouble to study the question. Hon. Members support the Government in carrying on these operations in Egypt; but of all the Members of the House are there 10—well, perhaps, I exaggerate when I ask are there 10—are there 25—who have read the history of this Egyptian Question? How many have read Mr. Cave's Report; how many have studied the particulars of Mr. Goschen's Mission;

how many know of the Convention which regulates Egyptian finance; how many know of the London Conference; how many have studied the long history of these transactions which have led up, step by step, to the ruin and bankruptcy of Egypt; and how many, having studied that history, have come to the conclusion that I have done, that special Missions to Egypt are neither more nor less than a convenient cloak for Ministers to protect themselves from criticism in this House? I maintain that if it were possible to get the people of England, or even the Members of this House, to study the Egyptian Question as they would study a question in which their own pockets were interested—and, indeed, their own pockets are affected in this Egyptian matter, if they could only realize it—they would not tolerate the present state of affairs for six months, or would not rest satisfied until the last British soldier had left Alexandria. Believe me, that when the last British soldier has left Alexandria the whole of this Egyptian business will be condemned on all sides, as the Zulu War was condemned. I remember the time when a man who condemned the Zulu Expedition was regarded as a traitor; but opinions have altered now. So it will be with respect to this Egyptian business. The interests of individuals are so great in Egypt that, as long as you continue to pay Ambassadors these enormous salaries, so long will excuse after excuse be found for postponing the evacuation of Egypt. There are some men who are determined that the British soldiers shall never evacuate Egypt, in order that these great interests shall be protected and these large salaries paid, and the hateful system maintained of governing a far-off country, whose affairs we cannot understand, and, therefore, must hand them over to men who may be honest or dishonest, but whom this House is utterly unable to control or to hold responsible for their actions.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn): I do not wish to intrude for more than one moment upon the attention of the Committee; but having supported this Vote in the last Parliament, and also in the first Session of the present Parliament, I desire to say that though I shall again support the Vote, because I think we must trust our Executive,

whoever they are, still I do think the time has come when we might minimize our diplomatic powers in Egypt. I think that the retention of both Sir Evelyn Baring and of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is a superfluous use of our power. It is immaterial to me which of these gentlemen is retained; but I presume that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, of the two, has the greater knowledge of the East and is the better diplomatist. Sir Evelyn Baring is an eminent financier; but we have already a great financier in Egypt, whose name appears in connection with the recent arrangement of the financial affairs of Egypt—Mr. Edgar Vincent. Therefore, I think we might well leave Sir Henry Drummond Wolff alone, or Sir Evelyn Baring might receive instructions to devote his attention to the subjects which have hitherto occupied Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) as to the result of the various Missions to Egypt, and I know of none more useful than that of Lord Dufferin. But, all the same, I do agree with the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dillon) that the taxpayers of this country have paid quite enough for this sort of double Mission; and I hope Her Majesty's Government, in obtaining this Vote for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, will give us some assurance as to when we shall reduce our diplomatic force in Egypt.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): As an independent Member of this House, I should like to point out that hon. Members opposite seem to assume that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was sent out to Egypt without the knowledge of the House of Commons, or of Parliament generally, or of the country. Those who have watched the matter from the first know perfectly well that every Member of Parliament, both in this and the other House, approved of the sending out of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and that if they disapproved of the Mission they did not raise their voices against it. Under such circumstances, it is very unseemly and quite out of date for hon. Members opposite to get up now and denounce Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. They should, as true Englishmen or Britons, having approved the Mission—the majority of them, at all events, and 19-20ths of the people of the country approved the Mission—they should

pay the bill and be quite satisfied. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff does not require any words from me in vindication of his conduct; but I maintain that his conduct has been satisfactory from the first. It is only a little waste of time, or another mode of Obstruction for hon. Gentlemen——

MR. BRADLAUGH: I rise to Order. I desire to ask the Chairman whether the hon. Gentleman is right in terming the opposition I have offered to this Vote a mode of Obstruction?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not in Order in imputing motives of that kind.

MR. ATKINSON: I beg to say that I do not impute any motive, and I do not refer to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) in any way whatever. I listened to the hon. Member's speech, and I was pleased with the manner in which it was delivered; but if I was pleased with the manner in which it was delivered, I disagreed entirely with the matter of the speech. As my opinions upon it have been challenged, I say——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman will not be in Order in continuing these remarks.

MR. ATKINSON: Then, how is it possible to debate? I suppose I must throw myself upon the Committee, and say that, at all events, I have a right, as a taxpayer and as a Representative, to express on behalf of myself and my constituents thorough satisfaction with the work Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has done, and dissatisfaction at the criticisms which have been in such an un-English way directed against the Mission of that gentleman. I hope the Committee will vote in such an English way as will satisfy Sir Henry Drummond Wolff that there are plenty of us ready to defend him in his absence. I shall always be ready to do so.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Mr. Chairman, there are some speeches which one always expects to finish with "Rule Britannia!" and to that class belongs the speech which we have just heard. The hon. Gentleman asks how we are to debate in this House. I will tell him. If he has nothing pertinent to say he had better not say anything.

MR. ATKINSON: I rise to Order, Mr. Chairman; I think that that is very impertinent.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Now, Sir, the hon. Gentleman's argument is that because there is no protest against Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's going out to Egypt, we ought consistently to pay a salary of £12,000 year after year to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff went out, as the hon. Member and all of us know, on a temporary Mission. It was fully understood in all parts of the House that it was a temporary Mission. At the same time, if I remember rightly, when Sir Henry Drummond Wolff did go out there was no Ambassador at Constantinople, but only a Chargé d'Affaires. We cannot extend a temporary Mission year after year at this very great cost to the country. I fully acknowledge that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is a very able diplomatist, and I have no doubt that he will render good services; but surely, if the Government think that he is worthy of something being done for him, they ought not to allow him to go on in this way cadging on the Treasury, but appoint him to some permanent place abroad. I hope we shall have some distinct understanding that this temporary Mission will cease, because it is becoming a permanent one. We have an Ambassador at Constantinople, and a Consul General at Cairo. Both of these officials are very highly paid. Sir William White has the reputation of being a gentleman who thoroughly understands Eastern affairs, and Sir Evelyn Baring we have heard again and again praised in this House. It is clear that if we have Sir Evelyn Baring at Cairo, and we have Sir William White at Constantinople, we really do not want, notwithstanding his great abilities, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff gravitating from one to the other. There is no use crying over spilt milk. We shall divide as a protest. At the same time, we ought to have a clear understanding that this Mission will cease, and that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, if the Government think it right that he should be provided for, shall be provided for by his appointment to some position which will be chargeable to the ordinary Estimates.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Mr. Chairman, the discussion has travelled some way from the Supplementary Vote for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's

Mission At the same time, I certainly must recognize that there is hardly any part of the Egyptian Question which has arisen since this Mission which may not be in some way identified with Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's work. And if I am successful, as I hope I shall be, in satisfying the Committee that the time of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has not been wasted, but occupied with really most important affairs which are likely to produce very valuable results, I think that neither the Committee nor Sir Henry Drummond Wolff himself will have any reason to complain of the discussion on this Vote having been somewhat extended. I think it due to the hon. Members who have spoken to notice the different points which they have taken up. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), who spoke first, asked why there are Supplementary Votes. In some cases Supplementary Votes are necessary, because unexpected circumstances have occurred; but in this case a Supplementary Vote is necessary, because the Mission has extended over a longer period than was provided for originally. We shall have presently to give some reasons why the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has been extended beyond what was at first contemplated. It must be evident to the Committee that since the Mission has been extended, we are obliged to ask for more money in respect of it. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) asked a question of some importance, and one which he is thoroughly justified in asking, having regard to the Papers presented to Parliament upon the affairs of Egypt. The hon. Gentleman referred to some despatches in a Blue Book of last year which appeared to show that a further expenditure had been contemplated in connection with Suakin, and that this expenditure was expressly approved of by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. It is true, Sir Frederick Stephenson contemplated the existence of a special force in defence of Suakin, and that the expenses connected with a part of that force were to be borne by Her Majesty's Government. It is also true that the then Secretary of State acknowledged the intention of undertaking that liability. That, of course, took place in a former Administration; but, at the same time, the position is quite plain. In the first

place, at that time the frontiers of Egypt required a much larger defensive force than at present; and it was absolutely necessary, inasmuch as Her Majesty's Government had undertaken the charge of the military operations in Egypt, that the expenses of the defence of the frontier should be incurred. There was no binding engagement on this country, for it was never communicated to the Government of Egypt.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Baronet is mistaken; the Representative of Egypt—Watson Pasha—announced the sum in Paper, No. 77.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I am sure that it was never announced to the Government of Egypt that Her Majesty's Government would undertake a permanent charge of £56,000 for the defence of Suakin, and even if there was such an engagement we should not be called upon to fulfil it, because the charge will not amount this year to so large a sum. The efforts of Her Majesty's Government, which I hope are now accomplished, or are in course of early accomplishment, have been directed to the bringing of the military expenditure of Egypt within the means of the Government. I can assure the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bradlaugh) that, although it was contemplated by the General commanding in Egypt in 1886 that a portion of the expenses of the defence of Suakin should be undertaken by Her Majesty's Government, Her Majesty's Government are really under no obligation to undertake it. Then the hon. Member went on to speak of the stores which were supplied to the Government of Egypt by this country. Well, Sir, I must say that we are going into rather ancient history; but the fact is that it was necessary to assist the Government of Egypt in defending their frontier, and the result of our assistance was that we were able to put down the invasion of Egypt Proper, and that the country enjoys such tranquillity now. The alternative course would have been not to have given stores and not to have given troops, and, I suppose, to have allowed the tide of invasion to roll over the civilized part of Egypt. Her Majesty's Government of that day did not think that that would have been a justifiable course, or consistent with our Mission, in Egypt. The hon. Member asks, and several others have asked, why was Sir

Henry Drummond Wolff sent to Egypt at all? Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was sent out originally to arrange a Convention with the Government of Turkey, in order that a Turkish Commissioner should be sent with him to Egypt with power to investigate the administration of the finances of that country, and to provide for the future of Egypt, and to take into consideration other matters mentioned in the Convention. Perhaps I may as well at this stage as at any other notice what the duties of the Commissioners were, and this will enable me to show the Committee that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has been of some real service in Egypt, and has laid down the foundation of reform which I trust will bear abundant fruit. The 2nd Article of the Convention, which was concluded in October, 1885, provided that the High Commissioner of Turkey and the High Commissioner of England should deliberate upon the general settlement of Egyptian affairs. Egyptian affairs, as I could show the Committee, have been constantly the subject of discussion between the Khedive himself, Nubar Pasha, Moukhtar Pasha, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. One of the first things done in pursuing the inquiry which this Imperial Commission conducted was to send Shurdi Pasha to Wady Halfa, from which place he has sent most important representations upon the state of the country beyond Wady Halfa—Reports which have enabled the Government to place only that amount of force upon the frontier which was absolutely necessary. By the 3rd Article of the Convention, the two High Commissioners were to organize, in concert with His Highness the Khedive, the Egyptian Army. Well, we have already laid on the Table the Correspondence with Moukhtar Pasha on this subject. The cost of the Forces, Native and British, has been constantly under discussion, and are now about to be brought to a settlement. But the most important head under which the position of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff may be viewed is the 4th Article of the Convention, which provides that the two High Commissioners, in concert with the Khedive, were to examine into all the branches of Egyptian Administration, and introduce in them the modifications which might be considered necessary. The time has come when

I am able to present to Parliament some Papers with which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has furnished Her Majesty's Government, and my conviction is that when these Papers have been read by hon. Members, some Gentlemen who have talked slightly of his Mission, and have attached very little value to it, will be rather ashamed of what they have said. I am prepared to say that the skill, the research, the force manifested in these Papers by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff will impress everyone who reads them. In these Papers Sir Henry Drummond Wolff lays the foundations of reforms in the Government of Egypt, and follows up the labours of those who went before him, which show, in a comprehensive way, the evils which afflict the Government of Egypt, and the manifest remedies that ought to be applied. The Papers deal with various subjects. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff reports upon the working of the Capitulations, and in various respects. He deals with the question of the administration of justice; with the causes of losses on Customs. He deals with the Post Office, and also with the difficulties of administration by reason of the many functionaries imposed upon it by foreign Powers. He goes on, in further Papers, to point out the grievous burden which the great number of foreign officials inflict upon the resources of Egypt likewise. He likewise points out the result of the legislative alterations which were instituted by Lord Dufferin, and which, though not carried out to the full, have produced valuable benefits. He calls attention to the enormous abuses of the existing systems of pensions, and shows how they might be commuted. He presents a picture of the terrible incidence of the Egyptian debts, and indicates the manner in which the burden may be lightened. In the very last month, on the eve of his departure for Constantinople, where he intended to report to Her Majesty's Government the result of his labours, he presented most important Papers relating to the condition of the Egyptian railways, which prove the manifest need of a different form of management. Had we not had so much before us to be done I am sure I could have interested the Committee very much by giving them some sketches from those Papers. On every one of

these subjects I have named Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has brought to light the enormous evils I have referred to, and shown their ramifications through every department of the administration and government of Egypt.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Will these Papers be presented to the House?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I stated that the Papers would be laid before Parliament. One of the Capitulations has existed during the past 700 years. The oldest of them is 700 years old. The English Capitulation is more than 300 years old, and so forth. There are 17 or 18 of them altogether, and their result is to interfere very much with the power of the Rulers of Egypt in almost every particular, crippling them to the utmost, and depriving them, I may say, of all respect in the eyes of their subjects. I will do no more than mention these subjects; but what I have stated to the Committee, as to the value of these documents, I state with the full consciousness of the responsibility I take upon myself, that I believe that my description of these Papers will be realized when hon. Members get them into their hands.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): When will they be in the hands of Members?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: As I stated to the Committee, they will be presented immediately. Then there are other matters. There is the question, for instance, of International and Consular Tribunals, which forms a subject of considerable difficulty and delicacy, and these and smaller measures require the exercise of great skill in dealing with them. Again, there is the Article relating to the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt at a convenient period, which has to be arranged. Now, what I have to state is this—that the withdrawal of the British troops and the withdrawal of the British Government from Egypt depends entirely on the extent to which these reforms can be carried out, and by what time the Government of Egypt can be made self-sustaining and self-reliant. So long as Egypt has this grievous burden laid upon it by foreign expenditure, so long as it is unable to preserve order within its own boundaries, and to make foreigners who live in the country pay their full share of the taxes of the country; and so long as the just

balance of Revenue and Expenditure are dependent on the resources of the country, and there are no means to develop those resources, so long would our departure be the signal for fresh disorders, and for the return either of ourselves or of some other Power to the country. I do not think Her Majesty's Government would be wise and loyal if they were to give a pledge to the House as to an early period of withdrawal without having, in the first place, secured the means of carrying out the duties they have undertaken as to the Government of Egypt, and have enabled that Government to maintain itself satisfactorily. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) complained of delays in opening the Soudan trade. If he meant the words he used—if he spoke seriously when he referred to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's neglecting this measure in consequence of being engaged with festivities, and not paying attention to it until urged thereto by the arrival of German traders, I must say that his observations are hardly worth noticing. In the last Blue Book there are, no doubt, contradictory recommendations. At one time Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is sanguine as to be able to open up trade with the Soudan at an early period. Then, at a later period—in August, 1886, I think—he says it will be premature to do so. Circumstances changed, and influenced his opinion. But the hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson) referred to Colonel Grove's recommendation. He said that Colonel Grove was sent out to Egypt to inquire as to the prudence of re-opening trade with the Soudan, as if a Special Commissioner at Cairo and a Consul General were not sufficient to prosecute any such investigation. I think it was no wonder, looking at the divergent views expressed, that Her Majesty's Government—the Government of the day—sent out an officer in whom they had confidence to give an opinion on the matter; but I do not find that Colonel Grove recommended that the trade should be re-opened at once. He said—"It would, I think, be premature to raise the existing blockade at the present moment." He did not report in favour of the immediate re-opening of the trade with the Soudan; but this I will say—that since Lord Salisbury took Office in July last, Her Majesty's Government have been extremely desirous

of re-opening this trade at the earliest possible moment; but the best advice showed that it would not be prudent to do so until the Nile had fallen, and there was no fear of an advance by the rebels. When we were satisfied that the rebels had lost heart and had fallen back, and when the opening of trade would not be attended with risk, but, on the contrary, with good encouragement to the tribes who were in rapid succession seeking to renew their intercourse with Egypt, then the trade was to be re-opened. Now, I am rather surprised at the line taken by the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley), because one would have thought, from his statement, that every country that had to do with Egypt was right but ourselves. The French, he said, had a much greater interest in Egypt than we had; and, therefore, we should not seek to manage that country, but should leave it to France.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I said we ought to consider the susceptibilities of France with regard to the future government of Egypt, rather than the opinions of the Turk, in the same way as France considered the susceptibilities of England during the Anglo-French negotiations for the commercial control of the Suez Canal.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I hope Her Majesty's Government have considered, not only the susceptibilities, but the rights of the various Powers besides their own. There has been no desire on the part of England to gain any exclusive advantage over any other Power. We have recognized the susceptibilities of France; and if we could be at all successful in restoring Egypt to prosperity, and putting her in a position to exercise self-government, we shall hope that all nations will reap advantage as well as ourselves. But Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is not now in Egypt, but in Constantinople, where he is fulfilling part of the task submitted to him—namely, the negotiations with regard to what has been called the ulterior Convention. It was contemplated, under the 6th Article of the Convention of 1885, that as soon as an inquiry had been finished the Convention should be considered. That is the object of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's visit to Constantinople now. He is occupied in making a proposal to the Sublime Porte,

with the knowledge of the Representatives of the other European Powers, in regard to measures which it may be hoped will greatly improve the condition of Egypt, and will remove many of the evils which he has done so much to expose, and which will enable Her Majesty's Government to bring to an end their occupation of Egypt in a manner which will not expose the country to renewed risks. But the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has been, no doubt, more extended than was at first contemplated; but no one knows better than the hon. Member for Northampton that the affairs of the East are not conducted in a hurry. It is absolutely beyond dispute that if we were to leave Egypt in haste at the present moment we should go away without our work having been accomplished. I believe I may say that great advantage has been gained by the inquiry having been conducted by a person who had established personal relations with the Sultan's Ministers, and who has brought back to the Sultan the result of his negotiations in Egypt. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff possesses, I believe, the very highest qualifications for dealing with Orientals. He has patience, he has tact, and he has determination; and I think that when the House of Commons has seen the Reports he has sent from Egypt, hon. Members will recognize that he possesses talents of a very high order. But hon. Members may ask us, was it necessary to send Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to Egypt, when we were represented there by an able Minister, and when at the Porte we were represented by an able Ambassador? Well, Sir, both these officers have special duties to perform. The duties of Ambassador at the Porte, and the duties of Agent and Consul General in Egypt are very onerous, and are continuous. The Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was to aid in a special investigation; and though we sometimes send a Commissioner to inquire into the working of a great Department in this country, that does not supersede the necessity of having a Minister at the head of that Department. An investigation of this sort, to be valuable, must be done by someone outside the Executive; and Sir Evelyn Baring has been constantly and heavily weighted with the duty of advising the Government of Egypt.

But, as I have said, the main advantage which has been gained by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission has been not only the conduct of that inquiry, but its representation of us at Constantinople. As to the duration of that Mission, I cannot fix a definite limit; but I should like to tell the House this—that the negotiations at Constantinople have now arrived at a stage which gives great promise of success. There have been rivalries and jealousies, as is natural between great Powers under circumstances like the present; but these rivalries and jealousies have never attained a force which threatened an interruption of friendly relations. The Powers have, with great generosity, refrained from pressing Her Majesty's Government on this matter; and now that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's proposals have been presented to the Porte, and have been made known to the Representatives of the other Powers, I can say that no Powers have opposed, while some Powers have supported them, and that even those Powers which might have been expected not to accept the proposals so readily, have not only offered no active opposition, but have attached conditions to their acceptance which are by no means insuperable. I say that the result of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's negotiations gives good promise of success; but that if these negotiations were to be interrupted by the action of this House, or if it were shown that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is not supported by a decisive majority of this House, so as to leave it in doubt whether or not he was supported by public opinion, it would be a great public misfortune. Let me remind the House of the manner in which this matter was left by the late Government. On the 6th of May, 1886, the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) said that—

“Matters connected with the missions and communications between Moukhtar Pasha and Sir Henry Wolff continue as before; but they have not yet reached a stage at which it would be possible with convenience to present them to Parliament.”—(3 *Hansard*, [305] 379.)

Well, May, 1886, is not March, 1887, and I am not going to rely too much on that statement. The right hon. Gentleman recognized that though Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had been sent out by his Predecessors, the operations in which

he was engaged were of so difficult a nature that it would be rash to disturb him. These negotiations have been carried on since, and I trust we may be allowed to bring them to a successful issue. I therefore hope I may appeal to the Committee not to grudge the money which is required to pay the expenses of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission up to the close of the financial year.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think everyone in the House must feel that there was ample reason for bringing forward opposition to this Vote; and I think a great deal has been said in the course of the debate to show that on both sides of the House, though of course more palpably on this side, there exists great dissatisfaction with the present position of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission. Something has been said as to the action of the late Government in not recalling Sir Henry Drummond Wolff when they came into Office. I admit that that is a fair remark to make; but the hon. Gentleman who made it must remember that when the late Government came into Office, a little more than a year ago, they were aware from the first that their tenure of Office was very uncertain, and that it was extremely doubtful that it would last for more than two or three months. In point of fact, it continued about six months, and some time was necessary to enable the Government to understand how things stood in regard to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission. When the requisite inquiries had been completed, and we were in a position to act, the General Election was so near that it scarcely seemed our duty—knowing that we were going to the country—to take the step of interrupting Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's negotiations. That is now more than eight months ago; and as the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down very properly said, May, 1886, is a very different thing to March, 1887. We did not contemplate, when we allowed Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's negotiations to go on, that his Mission would have lasted nearly so long as it has now lasted; and I gather from the conduct of the Government in not proposing this Vote in the Autumn Session for the whole current year that they did not intend that it should go on even up to now. If I am wrong I hope I shall be corrected; but

I think that is a reasonable interpretation to put upon their conduct. The Mission, including Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's salary and all the incidental expenses, comes to more than £15,000 a-year, and the Mission has now lasted for about 19 months, a much longer period than any of those other Missions to which the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley) referred. A good deal has been said as to the respective functions of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Sir Evelyn Baring. It is true—and it seems to me that that might have been stated more fully—that the distribution of duties between these two gentlemen has effected some economy of time and labour. No doubt it was better that Sir Evelyn Baring should undertake the financial business and the direction, so far as it rested with our Representative, of the ordinary affairs of the country, while the diplomatic and military questions were dealt with by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. To that extent there was, no doubt, a certain saving of time and labour; but, at the same time, it seems to me that the saving and economy has been very far from such as is represented by the sum of £15,000 a-year. The right hon. Gentleman opposite also refers to these Reports by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff that he proposes to lay on the Table. I have no doubt that these Reports will be very interesting, and will contain in a concise and summary form much of that information which the House now finds it so difficult to obtain from the scattered despatches and documents in the Blue Books. I have no doubt that a view of those questions ranging from the period which has elapsed since the time of the Sultan Saladin will be historically interesting; but I must take leave to doubt if the Reports that we are to enjoy the reading of will be fairly worth £15,000 a-year, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman opposite ought not to rest his case on that. It seems to me that it would be very easy to get admirable Reports as good as these from persons not occupying the highest posts in the Civil Service of this country at a very much smaller charge than is proposed in this Vote. I conclude, therefore, for all these reasons, that the right hon. Gentleman has given no sufficient justification for this Vote.

I cannot find either that the work Sir Henry Drummond Wolff does or the Reports he writes the Government, giving him the utmost credit for his diplomatic skill, and for the amount of study he has bestowed upon the question, is an excuse for continuing to spend £15,000 a-year on his Mission. Has there been any reason shown by the right hon. Gentleman why this Vote should not be rejected? If the case stood merely as I have put it so far, I should find it quite impossible not to vote for a reduction; but the right hon. Gentleman, in the last few minutes of his speech, told us what I thought was a far more important thing than anything he had said in the earlier portion of it. He told us, with all the responsibility of a Member of the Executive Government, that the negotiations Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was conducting had reached a point at which the Government expected an immediate and important result from them. He said of the attitude of various Powers that even some of those Powers from which opposition might have been expected were not unfavourably disposed to the proposals which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had been instructed to make, and that the Government had reason to believe that a successful end would soon be reached. I also understood the right hon. Gentleman to say—and he will correct me if I misunderstood him—that Her Majesty's Government were directing their efforts entirely towards the speedy evacuation of Egypt. I understood him to put his case thus: if we were to refuse the Vote it would have the effect of weakening the hands of Her Majesty's Government in endeavouring to bring about that object. I am aware that there were certain conditions which have not yet been fulfilled which are necessary in order to enable the evacuation to take place—that certain reforms have to be completed and certain arrangements to be made. But I understood him to repeat the assurance, given in debate three weeks ago, that the whole object of the Government is to effect these reforms, so as to enable this country to withdraw from Egypt as soon as we can possibly do so, without endangering the prospects of the tranquillity of that country. If that is so, I am bound to say we are put in a very difficult position. When the Executive Government come to this

House and, with their full responsibility, tell us that by weakening their hands at this moment we should inflict what the right hon. Gentleman calls a great public misfortune upon the country, I cannot undertake the responsibility of weakening their hands in that way. I think it impossible, if the Executive Government tell us they have reasonable grounds for believing that they are within a short time of bringing their negotiations to a satisfactory close, and if they assure us that the objects of these negotiations are exactly what we ourselves desire them to be, I say it will be impossible, or at any rate difficult and inconsistent with established practice in regard to the management of foreign policy, to withdraw our confidence and support from them at the critical moment. But there is one point upon which I think they ought to have given us a more explicit assurance. On looking into the Estimates for next year we find an amount put down for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission. I have no Paper by me at this moment, but I believe it is £10,000—that is to say, £10,000 to commence on the 1st of April next. If that be so, and if my recollection is right, that is rather an important element in the Vote, because it seems to imply that Her Majesty's Government, in framing their Estimates for the coming year, contemplated a continuance of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff for at least a considerable part of the year. I do not think that sufficient reason has been given by the right hon. Gentleman to justify such a continuance. It is true that is not what we are called upon to vote upon on the present occasion; but I think that the right hon. Gentleman or some other Member of the Government should assure us that they intend to make the continuance of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission rather an affair of weeks than of months. The Mission has extended already over a period of 19 months, and such a Mission to an Eastern Court is likely to go on indefinitely, unless there is some positive undertaking given as to when it may be expected to terminate. I therefore appeal to the Government to give us some information on that point. Are we to expect, if we do not now insist on the reduction of this Vote, that the Government will be encouraged to continue this Mission,

or are we to have a pledge that the Government will bring it to an early close, and that they will relieve the country from this expenditure? However great Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's talents may be, and however important the end in view, I must repeat that the results of his Mission have not been, and have not seemed to us at all likely to be, commensurate with the heavy cost which that Mission throws upon the country.

MR. BRADLAUGH: There is only one point upon which I wish further to trouble the Committee; but it is one on which I absolutely disagree with the right hon. Baronet who has addressed the Committee, and on which I think there should be some further explanation. The charge I made with reference to Suakin was a specific charge—namely, that the Government had pledged itself to a payment of £56,000, and to a payment besides that of £11,000. I understand the right hon. Baronet to say that if there was a payment at all that payment was limited to one year.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I said it was true that at the time it was contemplated by the Government that a payment might be necessary for a longer period, if the Egyptian Government could not afford to undertake it themselves. I said that for the defence of Egypt it was necessary that Her Majesty's Government should undertake it; but I said that I was sure that Her Majesty's Government had never come under an engagement to the Egyptian Government to continue it annually when the necessity for the payment being undertaken by us had gone by.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I understand the right hon. Baronet to admit now that there was a specific engagement to pay for one year?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: The Secretary of State for War undertook that responsibility to the General commanding in Egypt, who proposed that Her Majesty's Government should undertake the charge, and I believe there was no engagement given to the Egyptian Government to that effect.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Baronet is mistaken. It was not a proposition by General Stephenson to the English Government; but it was a clear direction by the Secretary of State for War for the time being to our Repre-

sentative in Egypt. It was not any matter of the former Government—it was a matter in which the present Leader of the House gave specific directions in writing. He being then Secretary of State for War, expressly desired that a certain engagement should be carried out. Acting under this direction, General Stephenson tried to carry out the arrangements, and succeeded in carrying them out; and the details are given in Despatch No. 89, and in the enclosure to that Despatch. It is as follows:—

“With reference to Major Lennox’s letter to you (that is to Sir Evelyn Baring) of the 24th December, 1885, I have to inform you that the Secretary of State for War was desirous that the Egyptian Government should raise two additional battalions to operate with the Egyptian Army, the charge for which would be borne by the British Government. I have to inform you that Her Majesty’s Government has now authorized the following Egyptian troops for service at Suakin, the charge for which will also be borne by the British Government.”

The troops are then specified, and the despatch goes on to say that Her Majesty’s Government undertakes to meet the annual cost of the above force to the extent of £56,440, in addition to the sum of £5,000 for first equipment. But the right hon. Baronet says that there was no communication to the Egyptian Government. Again the right hon. Baronet must be mistaken. If it were not communicated to the Egyptian Government, the Egyptian Government must have found it out without its being communicated to them. Because, although I admit there is no despatch laid before Parliament which shows that, yet it is true there is a despatch signed by Watson Pasha, acting on behalf of the Egyptian Government, which says that the garrison at Suakin has now to be paid for by the British Government. It is, I think, impossible that this should not have been communicated. On the contrary, the evidence is overwhelming that it was communicated, and I will show you why. If the Egyptian Government did not know that we had agreed to pay £56,440 a-year, they could not have increased their demand by £11,000. But having made that demand the Government have increased the Estimate for this Service to the sum which is the subject of this discussion. Writing on the 12th of April General Stephenson said that the last demand of the Egyptian Government had been

raised from £11,000 to £16,440. It is, therefore, simply impossible that the Egyptian Government should not have known of the engagement. The right hon. Baronet says that the sum has now been reduced to £35,000 a-year. Does he mean that this year we only pay £35,000? If he does mean that, his explanation lacked frankness; if he did not mean that, what can be the advantage of telling us that the £73,000 which we had agreed to pay is now to be reduced to £35,000? It is true that the right hon. Baronet says agreed does not mean agreed; that undertake does not mean undertake; and that it was only contemplated, not that the Government had said, that the engagement should be carried out. If the right hon. Baronet means only that the Government thought about this and were not going to do it, I submit that the language used by him may be characterized as trifling with this House.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I am sorry that the hon. Member for Northampton should be so angry with me. I have endeavoured to explain the position as well as I could, having received no Notice of this matter.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg the right hon. Baronet’s pardon—I gave full Notice. I gave Notice on the Address, that I intended to raise this question, which Notice, probably, the Government treated with the contempt they thought it deserved.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: At all events there was no Notice on the Paper, and words dropped in debate are sometimes overlooked; but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that nothing was farther from my mind than to treat his Question with contempt. I have endeavoured to answer him as fully as I can on this point. Circumstances at all events have changed. At the time referred to there were 17,000 or 18,000 men in the Egyptian Army, and the number was far beyond what the Revenues of Egypt could bear. Her Majesty’s Government offered to bear a certain proportion of the expense, particularly in connection with Suakin; but happily times have changed very much for the better. Consequently it is now unnecessary to retain that Force, or that Her Majesty’s Government should undertake to pay any portion of the cost of the Force at Suakin.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH): I have stated in this House that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is conducting negotiations which the hon. Member for Northampton himself has recognized as being of a difficult, if not of an important character. We have the greatest possible hope that these negotiations will be attended with the result which we desire and anticipate. The hon. Member asks the Government to specify a date within which these negotiations shall be concluded. My right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has indicated sufficiently the character of these negotiations, and the result we hope to obtain by them; and I think the Committee will feel that it would be impossible for me or any Member of the Government to indicate at the present moment any period at which the negotiations will be terminated. Reference has been made to the Estimates of the coming year. With reference to those, I venture to say that we are actuated by the desire not to have a Supplementary Estimate under this head under any circumstances whatever. I am sure the Committee will feel why it is impossible for us to speak more confidently than we have upon this subject. Great progress has been made. We have indicated to the House more than once the conditions under which we felt we had duties to discharge in Egypt, and when those duties are discharged we shall retire with complete satisfaction at having carried out the work we undertook, and which I believe this House and the country have fully at heart.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Courtney, I feel bound to protest against the policy which Her Majesty's Government intend to carry out in Egypt. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State (Sir James Fergusson) has told us that England does not wish to derive any special advantage to herself in Egypt; he tells us that we went to Egypt to restore order in the country. But the feeling which many people have is that, in order to restore order, we have laid down conditions which will keep us in Egypt until the Millennium; the policy of the Government seems to be one which will necessarily compel us to remain in Egypt as long as there is an Egypt. The first condition laid down

by Her Majesty's Government is that all the foreign Governments agree to surrender the powers now given to them by the Capitulations. Does the right hon. Gentleman dream that the foreign Governments will ever surrender such powers? Would this country surrender its Capitulations if France or any other foreign Power were in the same position in Egypt that we occupy? Such a condition never can be complied with. Secondly, you want to set up a stable Native Government in Egypt. In the first place, you destroyed the old Chamber, and you have done nothing at all to bring into existence the Legislative Councils which Lord Dufferin advised should be formed. I doubt whether you can have a stable Government in Egypt as long as you keep Arabi Pasha and such men as he out of the country. It is because I think you are laying down conditions which never can be fulfilled, and that, in consequence, we shall always be kept in Egypt, that I shall vote against the allowance of this money.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 146; Noes 234: Majority 88.

AYES.

Acland, A. H. D.	Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Acland, C. T. D.	Craig, J.
Allison, R. A.	Craven, J.
Anderson, C. H.	Crawford, D.
Asher, A.	Cremer, W. R.
Asquith, H. H.	Dillon, J.
Austin, J.	Dillwyn, L. L.
Barbour, W. B.	Dodds, J.
Barry, J.	Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Biggar, J. G.	Ellis, J. E.
Blake, T.	Esmonde, Sir T. H. G.
Blane, A.	Esslemont, P.
Bolton, J. C.	Fenwick, C.
Broadhurst, H.	Finucane, J.
Bruce, hon. R. P.	Flower, C.
Buchanan, T. R.	Flynn, J. C.
Buxton, S. C.	Fox, Dr. J. F.
Byrne, G. M.	Gardner, H.
Cameron, C.	Gilbooly, J.
Campbell, H.	Gill, H. J.
Carew, J. L.	Gill, T. P.
Chance, P. A.	Gully, W. C.
Channing, F. A.	Haldane, R. B.
Clancy, J. J.	Harrington, E.
Clark, Dr. G. B.	Hayden, L. P.
Cobb, H. P.	Hayne, C. Seale-
Coghill, D. H.	Healy, T. M.
Cohen, A.	Hooper, J.
Coleridge, hon. B.	Hunter, W. A.
Connolly, L.	Illingworth, A.
Conway, M.	Jordan, J.
Conybeare, C. A. V.	Kay-Shuttleworth, rt.
Cossham, H.	hon. Sir U. J.
Cox, J. R.	Kennedy, E. J.

Kenny, C. S.
 Kenny, M. J.
 Labouchere, H.
 Lalor, R.
 Lane, W. J.
 Leahy, J.
 Leake, R.
 Lefevre, right hon. G.
 J. S.
 Lockwood, F.
 Lyell, L.
 Maclean, F. W.
 Mac Neill, J. G. S.
 M'Arthur, A.
 M'Cartan, M.
 M'Donald, P.
 M'Donald, Dr. R.
 M'Ewan, W.
 M'Lagan, P.
 M'Laren, W. S. B.
 Mappin, Sir F. T.
 Molloy, B. C.
 Montagu, S.
 Morgan, O. V.
 Morley, rt. hon. J.
 Mundella, right hon.
 A. J.
 Newnes, G.
 Nolan, Colonel J. P.
 Nolan, J.
 O'Brien, J. F. X.
 O'Brien, P.
 O'Brien, P. J.
 O'Connor, A.
 O'Connor, J. (Tippry.)
 O'Connor, T. P.
 O'Doherty, J. E.
 O'Hea, P.
 O'Kelly, J.
 Pease, A. E.
 Pickersgill, E. H.
 Picton, J. A.
 Pitt-Lewis, G.

Plowden, Sir W. C.
 Powell, W. R. H.
 Power, P. J.
 Price, T. P.
 Priestley, B.
 Provand, A. D.
 Quinn, T.
 Redmond, J. E.
 Reid, E. T.
 Rendel, S.
 Roberts, J. B.
 Robertson, E.
 Robinson, T.
 Rowlands, J.
 Rowntree, J.
 Russell, E. R.
 Russell, T. W.
 Sexton, T.
 Sheil, E.
 Shirley, W. S.
 Sinclair, W. P.
 Smith, S.
 Stack, J.
 Stanhope, hon. P. J.
 Stevenson, F. S.
 Storey, S.
 Sullivan, D.
 Summers, W.
 Sutherland, A.
 Tanner, C. K.
 Tuite, J.
 Watt, H.
 Wayman, T.
 Will, J. S.
 Williams, A. J.
 Wilson, H. J.
 Woodhead, J.
 Wright, C.

TELLERS.

Bradlaugh, C.
 Williamson, S.

NOES.

Addison, J. E. W.
 Agg-Gardner, J. T.
 Ainslie, W. G.
 Ambrose, W.
 Amherst, W. A. T.
 Anstruther, Colonel R.
 H. L.
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
 Atkinson, H. J.
 Baden-Powell, G. S.
 Baggallay, E.
 Baird, J. G. A.
 Balfour, G. W.
 Barry, A. H. Smith-
 Bartley, G. C. T.
 Bates, Sir E.
 Baumann, A. A.
 Beadel, W. J.
 Beckett, W.
 Bentinck, Lord H. C.
 Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
 Bentinck, W. G. C.
 Beresford, Lord C. W.
 de la Poer
 Bethell, Commander
 G. R.
 Birkbeck, Sir E.

Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
 Bond, G. H.
 Bonsor, H. C. O.
 Board, T. W.
 Borthwick, Sir A.
 Bridgeman, Col. hon.
 F. C.
 Bristowe, T. L.
 Brodrick, hon. W. St.
 J. F.
 Brooks, Sir W. C.
 Brown, A. H.
 Burdett-Coutts, W. L.
 Ash.-B.
 Campbell, Sir A.
 Campbell, R. F. F.
 Charrington, S.
 Clarke, Sir E. G.
 Cochrane-Baillie, hon.
 C. W. A. N.
 Coddington, W.
 Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
 Commerell, Adml. Sir
 J. E.
 Corry, Sir J. P.
 Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cross, H. S.

Currie, Sir D.
 Davenport, H. T.
 Davenport, W. B.
 Dawnay, Colonel hon.
 L. P.
 De Cobain, E. S. W.
 De Worms, Baron H.
 Dimsdale, Baron R.
 Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
 Dorington, Sir J. E.
 Dugdale, J. S.
 Duncan, Colonel F.
 Duncombe, A.
 Dyke, right hon. Sir
 W. H.
 Edwards-Moss, T. C.
 Elcho, Lord
 Elliot, Sir G.
 Ellis, Sir J. W.
 Elton, C. I.
 Evelyn, W. J.
 Ewart, W.
 Feilden, Lieut.-Gen.
 R. J.
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
 Ferguson, right hon.
 Sir J.
 Field, Admiral E.
 Finch, G. H.
 Fisher, W. H.
 Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
 Fitz - Wygram, Gen.
 Sir F. W.
 Folkestone, right hon.
 Viscount
 Forwood, A. B.
 Fowler, Sir R. N.
 Fraser, General C. C.
 Fulton, J. F.
 Gardner, R. Richard-
 son-
 Gathorne-Hardy, hon.
 A. E.
 Gibson, J. G.
 Giles, A.
 Gilliat, J. S.
 Godson, A. F.
 Goldsworthy, Major-
 General W. T.
 Gorst, Sir J. E.
 Goschen, rt. hn. G. J.
 Gray, C. W.
 Grimston, Viscount
 Grotian, F. B.
 Gunter, Colonel R.
 Hall, A. W.
 Halsey, T. F.
 Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
 Hamilton, right hon.
 Lord G. F.
 Hamilton, Lord E.
 Hardcastle, E.
 Hardcastle, F.
 Heath, A. R.
 Heathcote, Capt. J. H.
 Edwards-
 Heaton, J. H.
 Herbert, hon. S.
 Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
 Hervey, Lord F.
 Hill, right hon. Lord
 A. W.
 Hill, A. S.

Holland, right hon.
 Sir H. T.
 Holloway, G.
 Holmes, right hon. H.
 Hornby, W. H.
 Houldsworth, W. H.
 Howorth, H. H.
 Hozier, J. H. C.
 Hughes, Colonel E.
 Hughes - Hallett, Col.
 F. C.
 Hunt, F. S.
 Hunter, Sir W. G.
 Isaacs, L. H.
 Isaacson, F. W.
 Jackson, W. L.
 James, rt. hon. Sir H.
 Jarvis, A. W.
 Jennings, L. J.
 Johnston, W.
 Kelly, J. R.
 Kennaway, Sir J. H.
 Kenyon, hon. G. T.
 Kerans, F. H.
 Kimber, H.
 King, H. S.
 Knatchbull-Hugessen,
 hon. H. T.
 Knowles, I.
 Kynoch, G.
 Lafone, A.
 Lambert, I. C.
 Laurie, Colonel R. P.
 Lawrance, J. C.
 Lawrance, Sir J. J. T.
 Lea, T.
 Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
 Leighton, S.
 Lewisham, right hon.
 Viscount
 Llewellyn, E. H.
 Long, W. H.
 Low, M.
 Lowther, J. W.
 Macartney, W. G. E.
 Macdonald, right hon.
 J. H. A.
 Maclean, J. M.
 Maclure, J. W.
 M'Calmont, Captain J.
 Malcolm, Col. J. W.
 Mallock, R.
 Manners, rt. hn. Lord
 J. J. R.
 Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
 Matthews, rt. hn. H.
 Maxwell, Sir H. E.
 Mayne, Admiral R. C.
 Mildmay, F. B.
 Mills, hon. C. W.
 Milvain, T.
 More, R. J.
 Morgan, hon. F.
 Mount, W. G.
 Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir
 J. R.
 Mowbray, R. G. C.
 Mulholland, H. L.
 Muncester, Lord
 Murdoch, C. T.
 Newark, Viscount
 Noble, W.
 Norris, E. S.

Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Parker, hon. F.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Ritchie, rt. hn. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robertson, W. T.
Robinson, B.
Ross, A. H.
Russell, Sir G.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Slater-Booth, rt. hn. G.
Selwin - Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Capt. C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Smith, rt. hn. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M.
Talbot, J. G.
Tapling, T. K.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

Original Question again proposed.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): There is another item in this Vote which ought not to be allowed to pass without comment, and that is the item of £810 for the Zanzibar Delimitation Commission. It is as well that the Committee should bear in mind for what purpose this Commission was issued. The Zanzibar Delimitation Commission was appointed in consequence of the Germans stepping in and succeeding, by their method of dealing with the Natives of Zanzibar, in ousting British trade. British Representatives had to step in and do their best to protect the interests of British traders in that part of the world from what they were pleased to term German aggression. What is the consequence? It is that there are no less than three editions of Blue Books dealing with the subject, and that the more we read about the matter, the more humiliating it is, or, at any rate, ought to be, to any of the British Representatives who are concerned in this item. The practical surrender which the Zanzibar Delimitation Commissioners made in the presence of Germany is something pitiable, humiliating, and ludicrous in the extreme. What is the good of all the talk we hear

about patriotism? A great many hon. Members talk of patriotic pursuits; in my opinion, the most patriotic pursuit any Member can be associated with is that of saving the taxpayer's pocket. A considerable amount of money has already been paid in respect of the Zanzibar Commission, and now we are asked to pay £810 more. It is not a very large sum; but it is more than should be paid in connection with this humiliating surrender on the part of the British Representatives. Therefore, without any hesitation, I have to move that this Vote be reduced by the sum of £810, and I sincerely hope that we shall have an explicit explanation of the details of the Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £15,975, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service.—(Dr. Tanner.)

DR. TANNER declared that the "Ayes" had it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member name a second Teller?

DR. TANNER failed to nominate an hon. Member to tell with him, whereupon—

Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(4.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £9,050, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Expenses of Various Services (other than Consular) in connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Expenses of the Liberated African Department."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Mr. Chairman, there are in this Vote one or two items of a very extraordinary character. In the first place, the increase of the Vote is very heavy, the supplemental part being nearly double the original Estimate. The third item is one of £4,650—

"Compensation awarded to owners of American vessels detained in 1854, 1857, and 1860, on suspicion of being slavers."

That there should have been pending for 33 years compensation to reputed owners of slavers is, to say the least, peculiar. Having regard to the explicit terms of the Slave Trade Act, this is something which requires very special explanation

at the hands of the Government, which has, at last, resolved to pay this compensation. I presume from the nature of the third item it would be more convenient to treat it separately. Therefore I will not go into it. What I desire to do now is to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) how it comes that in spite of the increase in the capture of the slavers, which are said to be more numerous than anticipated, there is nothing in the way of set-off on account of the value of the vessels seized? There is in the Act a special provision made for the realization of the value of the vessels, whether they be British or foreign, whether they are sold in the market, or whether they are taken into Her Majesty's service, or bought by any foreign Power for the use of the Admiralty of that foreign Power. There certainly ought to be an item to the credit of the Exchequer upon this Vote. The next thing I have to ask the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jackson) is what the slave suppression authorities do with the slaves when they have seized the slavers. Is it a fact that they hand them over to certain persons who may or may not afterwards make profit out of them? Do these authorities, after having caught the slavers, allow the slaves to be directly or indirectly sold into slavery again? Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will answer these questions before I go into any other items of the Vote.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): Mr. Courtney, a considerable sum is voted every year for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and a large amount is allowed for the pay of the officers and men employed in the service. I should like to know whether other countries contribute anything towards the suppression of the slave traffic; are we the only country in the world who take active and expensive measures against the Slave Trade? I should also be obliged if the Government will say where these ships are employed—on the West Coast of Africa or in the Red Sea? I am very much afraid these items for the suppression of the Slave Trade are a sort of revivals which everyone expect. From our own commercial point of view it is of great importance that the Slave Trade should be put down, but I believe that in the suppression very large sums of money might be saved. I should like

some explanation of the general policy of the Government upon this question, and I should also like to know in what part of the world the vessels are employed; whether the Government see any necessity in continuing this expenditure, and whether other nations contribute in like manner towards the suppression of the slave traffic. I should also like information as to the kind of slavery found in the Red Sea?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am afraid I cannot afford much information as to the slavery carried on in the Red Sea, but I will give the Committee all the information I can. The hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) asks whether other countries contribute anything towards the suppression of the Slave Trade, or whether the whole of the expense is borne by us. So far as I know other countries do not contribute in any form or shape, but the whole of the expense is borne by us. The system of payment is based either upon the tonnage, or upon the number of slaves captured: this House has consented to the payment of so much per ton upon the vessels seized, or so much per head of the slaves who were liberated. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) very properly remarks that the Vote is very heavy, but I think he will see that this is one of the Votes it is absolutely impossible to estimate a year beforehand with any degree of accuracy. We are hoping that the Vote will die out through the stoppage of the trade. So long, however, as the House and the country are determined to carry on the crusade against the traffic in slaves, the Committee will hardly refuse this payment. The payments, amounting to £1,900, under the sub-head H, "maintenance of liberated Africans," are payments which are made according to the number of slaves who are liberated. An arrangement has been made with the Church Missionary Society and other Societies in that part of the world—[An hon. MEMBER: What part?—Zanzibar—and during the past year there has actually been handed over to the Church Missionary Society 453 slaves, and to other bodies 27. For these, £5 per head was paid, and for that payment the Societies have undertaken to be responsible for the education of the slaves and their subse-

quent freedom. The arrangement was made after very careful consideration, and it is an arrangement which, so far as we are concerned, admirably accomplishes the object in view—namely, the freedom of the men. And this is done at the least possible expense to this country. As to the credits, I regret I am not in possession of detailed information. So far as the Treasury are concerned, we have no knowledge of these credits. If there are any credits arising from these vessels, I can only suppose that they are dealt with by the Admiralty.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Mr. Courtney, it seems, therefore, that the entire expenses in connection with the suppression of the Slave Trade are not in the Vote before us, but that some of the expenses are to be found in the Naval Estimates. Disguise it as you may, this is to be considered a Supplementary Estimate towards the support of Her Majesty's Naval Services in the parts of the world in question. I understand that there are many vessels employed in this service. It is said that "the captures of slavers have been more numerous than was anticipated," and, therefore, an additional sum of £2,500 is required. The total for tonnage and slave bounties is thus brought up to £6,500. £3,726 is the sum required for the maintenance of liberated Africans. What I wish to call the attention of the Committee and of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jackson) to is this, that, so far as the captures go, they are an index that the Slave Trade is increasing. Seeing that the payments are by results, it is evident that the more that is paid the more slaves are captured. If there had not been a large number of vessels plying in the regions in question, if there had not been a very large amount of Slave Trading going on, it is as clear as day that the captures would not have been more numerous than was anticipated. Now, what is evident to any person who considers the matter is this, that the operation of the Slave Trade Act, and the operation of our Fleet in the suppression of the traffic, results in these two things—in a trade at night or in risky weather, and the inhuman treatment of the slaves. What do I find in the Act of Parliament? That all vessels which are found to possess accommodation for the carrying of slaves in proper

condition are to be seized and sold; that all vessels bearing the marks of the slaver are to be captured. Under ordinary circumstances, the Slave Trade is not carried on in vessels which possess accommodation for the humane treatment of the slaves, and it is pretty clear that any humanitarian views of the traders are completely frustrated by the arrangements which are made for the suppression of the traffic. Furthermore, I should like to know why we hand over the men, if they are liberated slaves, to the custody of other men. What property have we in the bodies of these men that we should hand them over to the missionaries of any Society? It is questionable whether it would not be better to attempt to regulate the traffic in insisting that the vessels used shall be such that no mischief shall be done to the men, rather than to take them to places in which, so far as my reading goes, their lot is very little improved. For these reasons, and without believing very much in the *bona fides* of some of the reports that I see, I have examined the Votes, and taken an interest in looking up the particulars that are mentioned in this Act. Dealing with the entire Vote, it strikes me, on looking at the Schedule which points out the marks which are to guide British officers in forming an opinion as to whether a vessel is a slaver, that the steps we take to put a stop to slavery by these means impose a great deal of misery upon the unfortunate victims of the traffic. For instance, in the Schedule of the guidance of Her Majesty's officers, it is declared that vessels are not to have hatchings or open gratings, and that they are not to have spare planks which are fit for being laid down as a second or a slave deck, and that they are not to have a large quantity of tanks, and so on. In fact, everything which would be provided by a humane master of a vessel for the comfort of the slaves must be put a stop to. In that way you inflict untold misery on these poor creatures, and I, therefore, contend that this expenditure of money is not only useless, but contributes vastly to the misery of the unfortunates the traffic in whom it is your object to put a stop to. What the fate of the miserable slave whom you may have succeeded in rescuing is, I do not know. When turned out at Zanzibar, or anywhere else, he has only main-

tenance for one year, for I believe the sum you pay for him is only £5. How long that sum will keep a man I do not know; but I think hardly more than a year. How long would the missionaries keep him? I think the Committee would be well advised in reducing this Vote in such a way as to mark their sense of the want of the necessity for such a system.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I am entirely opposed to any Vote in the Estimates for the suppression of the Slave Trade. I am not opposed to it because I am in favour of the Slave Trade; and if it could be shown that during the long period of years, 40 or 50 perhaps, during which English cruisers have been engaged in the suppression of this trade, that any real results have been achieved for the money which has been expended, no one would support the Vote more warmly than I should myself. But hon. Gentlemen who read the accounts of travellers in Africa can hardly rejoice at the efforts which are taking place to suppress the Slave Trade. My view is that hon. Gentlemen who vote this money do it to save their consciences, thinking they have done a fine thing by spending money to put down the Slave Trade. They are content with that, and they do not go beyond it. They do not read the accounts the travellers give of the sufferings of the slaves. These accounts are to the effect that the sufferings of these unfortunate beings have been enormously increased through the operations of Her Majesty's cruisers in the Red Sea. In order to escape from these cruisers the slaves are battened down under closed hatches. Even that is a trifle compared with the enormous loss of life and horrible sufferings which the traffic entails upon many human beings through the closing of the Nile route. If the Committee take the trouble to read the descriptions of travellers on the Nile; if they will read that most delightful book of travel published by Dr. Schweinfurth, the great German traveller, they will see there a statement made with regard to the result which has attended the stoppage of the Nile passage through the influence brought to bear by the British Government upon the Khedive Ismail. Instead of taking the slaves comfortably down the Nile, as used to be the custom, the dealers now struck off from above where Bahrel-Ghazal joins the Nile, and for 1,000

miles the slaves, chained man to man, are marched through the desert. This traveller tells us that the bleached bones of thousands and thousands of these wretched slaves are to be seen along that desert track—and, of course, you have stopped the Nile route. Dr. Schweinfurth, as everyone knows, is one of the greatest opponents of the slave traffic; but he states that the result of our interference with the trade on the Nile has been to inflict enormous sufferings, and to bring about enormous sacrifice of life, and consequent increase in the capture of slaves by dealers. He says, that since the stoppage of the Nile route, for every 100 slaves that reach their destination 300 slaves start out. In the old days the slaves, instead of being driven to death in this way, were well treated. They were well fed and cared for, just as a man who deals in cattle takes care of his beasts, in order that they might fetch a good price in the market. The object, of course, always was to hand them over in good condition to the purchasers. But hon. Gentlemen, nevertheless, go on voting on sentiment, and will not inquire into the result of these operations. They will say anyone who votes against this item is in favour of the Slave Trade; but I deny it. I am not in favour of the Slave Trade; but I agree with General Gordon, that the only way to put down that trade is to strike it at the root. If you want to put a stop to the traffic, disperse the camps of the slave dealers. Is the English Government prepared to do that? General Gordon undertook to do that, and would have done it if you had furnished him with the means. I do not say whether he ought to have done it or not; but I say that carrying on the foolish system in which you are embarked, expecting thereby to put down the Slave Trade, only ends in inflicting great misery and injury upon thousands of people, and is the greatest folly. If you are not prepared to follow General Gordon's advice, you had better let the whole matter alone. These slaves are not badly treated in Arabia—at least, so Arabian travellers tell us. When the slaves reach Arabia they are treated as kindly as your household servants are treated. Read "Palgrave's Travels in Arabia," and you will there see that the slaves are not treated as they used to be in the Southern States of America, which

you supported and endeavoured to maintain in their struggles with the Northern States. No, Sir; in Eastern countries slaves are treated as kindly as you treat your servants in London. Not infrequently they intermarry with the natives of the countries to which they are transported, and in many instances their children become recognized as citizens, and become owners of property. This is frequently found to be the case in Arabia. Mr. Palgrave's statement in his book—which is, perhaps, the best description of Arabian travel that has ever been published—says that many of these slaves, when they reach Arabia, could not be induced to go back again to their own country even if they had permission to do so. I can perfectly well believe his description. But we are told that the proceedings on the part of the British Government, to which I take exception, are merely for the purpose of putting down slavery. I dare say some hon. Member will vote upon this question under that impression; but I have pointed out that the results are entirely in the opposite direction. By the measures you have taken you have not put down slavery, and you never will put down slavery. You send into the Red Sea a lot of old tubs—I have seen them at Malta, and I know exactly what they are—the refuse of the British Navy, to plough around and wear out your officers and men, doing a great deal of mischief, and not the slightest bit of good. This Vote is a declaration that the Government are anxious to put down slavery. Well, here in the Estimate we have compensation for three American slavers as long ago as 1854, 1857, and 1860. An American slaver was seized as long ago as 1860 to put down slavery! Surely, any British-born man ought to blush when he sees such a record as this in an official document. The seizure of a slaver carrying slaves is to cost us something like £4,000. I suppose there has been a lawsuit going on between the two countries ever since. You were maintaining our pledge with regard to the putting down of the Slave Trade by upholding the one great slave-holding portion of America. You were doing this whilst you were spending the money of the British taxpayer on sea and on land in the endeavour to put down slavery elsewhere. Was your action consistent? You were doing all you could to thwart

the Northern States in putting down slavery in the only way it was possible to put it down—

THE CHAIRMAN: I must invite the hon. Gentleman to confine his remarks to the Vote before the Committee.

MR. DILLON: I am very sorry, Sir, if I have transgressed against the Order of the Committee; but I was led into this observation by one item of the Vote, which is the compensation for the seizure of American slavers. As I understand it they were seized by mistake. Is that not so? We are called upon to pay for the mistake that was made. The compensation which was paid to the American vessels was on account of these vessels having been seized on suspicion of being slavers. I suppose the assumption was that these vessels were bringing slaves to supply the wants of the Southern States of America. But as you, Sir, wish me not to pursue that line I will abandon it. I oppose this Vote, not because I am in favour of slavery, but because I think it is not a fact that they have put down slavery, and because I am convinced, from the reports of African travellers, that it results in increasing the sufferings of the slaves, and in a tremendous sacrifice of human life.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I do not think the Committee should follow the advice of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and strike out this Vote, the result of which would be to allow the revival of the Slave Trade. Practically, the whole argument of the hon. Gentleman has been that we ought not to interfere in this matter, and should refrain from our endeavours to suppress the Slave Trade. I do not wish to follow the hon. Gentleman into that argument, because I feel sure that the whole sense and feeling of the country will be against him on that point. But what I rose for was to ask a question with reference to the item the hon. Member referred to last. I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) if he can give the Committee some explanation of the delay which seems to have occurred in settling these claims, and why claims made so far back as 33 years ago are only now brought into the Supplementary Estimate? We have an item for vessels seized as far back as 1860. Why

is it that the account is only presented in a Supplementary Estimate in 1887? There must be some reason for this, and I ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to give it to us.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I must admit that on the face of the account as it appears on the Vote, it does seem very strange that a sum should be charged for what occurred so many years ago. The simple explanation of it is that the item appears as soon as the money becomes payable. The item relates to three vessels. The first of these was detained 14 days, in 1854, on suspicion of being concerned in the Slave Trade, by the Collector of Customs at Bathurst, in Gambia. The second one, the *Thomas Watson*, was detained 24 days, under like circumstances, by Lieutenant Watson, of the *Bloodhound*, on the West Coast of Africa. The claims appear to have remained in abeyance for a long time. In 1866 they were again revived, and a claim at that time was made by the American Government for 233,000 dollars. The British Government accepted liability in principle and offered to refer the question to arbitration. Some delay occurred—nothing came of it at that time. The claim was again preferred in 1879, the amount demanded then being 250,000 dollars. In the negotiations which occurred, the British Government took up the position that they were willing to accept the liability in principle, and were willing to refer the matter to arbitration. Apparently no settlement was possible, and arrangements were made to have the case tried. The Government, on the recommendation of their advisers, decided that they would resist all claim to compensation on account of interest; and after some considerable negotiations the British Government offered in settlement of the claim a sum of 10,000 dollars. This amount was refused by the American Government, but they made a counter off to accept 20,000 dollars, and the British Government, rather than proceed further with the case, accepted that as a compromise. Sir, that relates to two vessels, the *Mary Farmer* and the *Thomas Watson*. With regard to the other she was captured by one of Her Majesty's ships on January 12, 1860, under the belief that she was at the time in British waters, and was

about to ship a cargo of slaves. It was afterwards found that this vessel was not at the time in British waters, nor was she within the limits of British jurisdiction. Her Majesty's Government when they had discovered these facts tendered an apology to the American Government, and nothing more was heard of the matter until October, 1880—more than 20 years after the occurrence, when a claim was presented for compensation amounting to nearly 30,000 dollars. In the opinion of the advisers of Her Majesty's Government this claim was a most exorbitant one and ought to be dismissed, and that reasonably and fairly nothing could be claimed beyond a claim which might be made for the demurrage of the vessel during the time she was detained. The matter was referred to arbitration; but in the preliminary discussion the principles of arbitration could not be agreed on, and again the matter remained in abeyance for some time. To settle the matter £500 was offered and accepted. I am not able to inform the Committee what the precise cause of the delay was. The Committee will, no doubt, remember that at about that time slavery was not very popular in the United States, and that may have had something to do with the postponement of the matter for so long. I have endeavoured to explain to the Committee why the Votes are now presented to the House. They are presented at the earliest moment they could have been presented. I think the Committee will agree with me that, under the circumstances I have narrated, the settlement was perhaps the best that could be come to; and that on such a matter it would have been a great misfortune that any interference with the cordial relations which exist—and which, I hope, will long continue to exist—between this country and the United States should have taken place.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.): The manumission of the slaves in the West Indies is one of the fairest chapters in English history, and so strongly do I sympathize with the suppression of slavery that I hesitate to vote against this demand; but if slavery is to be effectually put down vessels of a different character and of much greater force should be used. I should like to be assured that the money expended under this Vote is honestly expended,

and that it is true and real expenditure. I would like further to know whether the £5 per head that has been mentioned is a full and final grant or a yearly grant. If I am satisfied upon these points, so strongly do I sympathize with the suppression of slavery, I shall vote in support of the Vote.

MR. DILLON: In order to raise the question I will move the reduction of the Vote by £2,500.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £6,550, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Service."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(5.) £1,500, Supplementary, Colonies, Grants in Aid.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): There is one item in this Vote that I should like some information about from the Government, and it is rather a curious item. The sum of £1,500 is asked for on account of the withdrawal of the gold and silver coins in Malta, and the issue of new ones, and I should like some explanation about this. First, I should like to know upon what principle the English taxpayer is called upon to pay for the re-coinage of the money of the Maltese people; and, secondly, how comes it that the re-coinage of so small an island as Malta—the entire population of which is but 200,000 persons, mostly poor people—amounts to the sum of £1,500. It seems to me a very extraordinary sum to pay for the re-coinage and withdrawal of these coins when the nominal value of the gold coin is only £1,500 in all, and the nominal value of the silver coin £10,000. Upon an entire sum of £12,000 it has cost £3,000 to withdraw the coinage; therefore, I think the Committee is entitled to some explanation as to what system or method is adopted for withdrawing these coins; and why and upon what principle has this charge been placed upon the taxpayer of this country. I have been myself informed that what happened was this:—the Governor of Malta was under the impression that the amount of money in the island was small when he undertook to withdraw it from circulation; that, in fact, it would not be more than a tenth of the sum actually withdrawn; but that, when notice was given of the

withdrawal, the Maltese dug up from various hiding places an amount of coin that no one had any idea was in existence upon the island—that bags of gold and silver coins were produced which dated back for hundreds of years. That may be all very well; but I do not see why the English people should have to pay for these extraordinary adventures. All I know is that, if these people were properly educated, they would be able to pay for their own coinage.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) is under some misapprehension. I may say, in the first place, that a great many difficulties arose with regard to the coinage, and by an Order in Council it was established that, in Malta and its dependencies, British coins should be the only legal tender. The existing coins in circulation, as the hon. Member says, have risen above the amount anticipated to be withdrawn. It is also the fact that the substitution of British silver coin for that which was then current in Malta has resulted, in so far as the British taxpayer is concerned, not only in no loss, but I believe I am justified in saying a great advantage. The hon. Member is perfectly aware that upon the coinage in silver we reap a large profit, and upon the distribution of our silver coin for that in circulation in Malta there has resulted a large profit. The total cost, as the hon. Member will see, was £3,000. An appeal was made to Her Majesty's Government to bear some portion of the cost of that, and, inasmuch as the facts are as I have stated, and it will leave no loss to the British taxpayer, Her Majesty's Government agreed to bear one-half.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The hon. Gentleman's education is still more puzzling. We are told the absolute value of the silver is greater than the nominal value of the coin, and that we gain by it; but how is it, then, that the cost is so great? I can understand the cost of the gold coins might have been very considerable; but there is only £1,500 altogether in gold, and the expense is £3,000. £3,000 of loss on coining £12,000 is something like 25 per cent, whereas there ought to be about 40 per cent gain. If we are really gaining upon the coinage, we ought to be able to show that from some other

source; but it seems to be, as it stands, very extraordinary there should be 25 per cent loss. We still want further explanation of how it is—if we have gained so much—we have to pay this money; and, secondly, as to the principle upon which the matter is settled. We ought to object to it and vote against it on principle. The presumption is that the Colonists ought to defray all the expenses connected with the Colony. No country in the world, or in the history of the world, has ever treated their Colonies so well as we have done, and scarcely any Colony in the world, or in the history of the world, have behaved so badly to the Mother Country as ours have done. [*Cries of "No, no!"*] Hon. Gentlemen say "No, no!" but can they point out to me, except our own, any Colony that has put any special charges against the Mother Country, and given foreigners better relations than they gave to the Mother Country. As it stands at present, not on behalf of the English taxpayers, but on behalf of the British taxpayers—because we in Scotland are not Englishmen, though anyone would think that we in the North are the mere province of England, judging from the language of hon. Members, and upon this point I have to object to our Irish Friends, like the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), using this objectionable phrase—I protest against this sum; and I say the Imperial British taxpayer ought not to pay a single farthing towards any expense incurred by the Colonies. Directly and indirectly we now pay a large sum; and, on these grounds, I object to the Imperial taxpayer paying anything more for any Colony.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES.

(6.) £11,254, Supplementary, Superannuations and Retired Allowances.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have got a word to say upon this Vote. One item is £1,000 for Royal Parks; and I should like to know which are the Royal Parks and what are the Royal Parks. The other point I wish to say a word about is in regard to the item of £1,500 for Diplomatic Services. Some years ago a Rule was passed—I forget by what Secretary—that every Minister

or Ambassador abroad should resign at the age of 70 years, and at that age he had a pension of £2,000 or £1,500, as the case might be. It always seemed to me that that Order was somewhat stupid, because while some are getting old at 70, others are in their prime. No doubt many of our servants abroad do good work, and are anxious to remain; but, against their own wishes, they are superannuated at the age of 70. I draw the attention of the Committee to this, because there is a case in point at present. I believe Lord Lyons, our present Ambassador at Paris, is verging on the age of 70 years. We all know what an excellent Ambassador Lord Lyons has been, how he has watched over the interests of the country, and it would be generally to the disadvantage of the country if Lord Lyons were not to remain at Paris.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no provision in this Vote for the pension of Lord Lyons; therefore, it is not competent to the hon. Gentleman to go into that.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I know there is no provision—that is to say, I am not sure of it, because there is £1,500 down that may be prospective for Lord Lyons, or given to him instead of the gentleman for whom it is presumably asked. At any rate, I will not go to Lord Lyons; but I hope we shall hear some statement from the Government that this Rule is not a hard-and-fast Rule, but that when a Minister is able and ready to do the work, that he should not be superannuated merely because he had reached the age of 70 years.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I do not think there is any hard-and-fast Rule.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) for some explanation of the item of £2,000 for Public Offices in Ireland, and the item of £700 for the insufficient provision for gratuities. These two items require some explanation; and, unless it is given, I shall have to move the reduction of the Vote.

MR. JACKSON: In Ireland there are two retirements from the Local Government Board, and one from public education. I am able to tell the hon. Member that none of these retirements have been

compulsory, and none of them come out of the ordinary course.

MR. DILLON: Some particulars ought to be given as to the cause of their retirement. There is a sum of £3,700 under the head, "Supreme Court of Judicature," which I am informed is not necessarily confined to Ireland, and therefore is not so enormous as it would otherwise appear; but I would suggest that it should be clearly stated whether it has reference to England, Ireland, or both.

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. Member is very well aware that sometimes men upon retirement get pensions, and sometimes gratuities. I am afraid I must plead guilty to the Treasury having, perhaps, failed to make the various matters sufficiently clear, and in future an endeavour will be made to make matters as clear as possible.

Vote agreed to.

(7.) £157, Supplementary, Pauper Lunatics, Scotland.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): As the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) is not here to-night, I will defer the remarks I had intended to make until we have a Secretary for Scotland.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

(8.) £1,000, Adelaide Exhibition.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I find that no provision is being made for two other exhibitions. I have been informed this sum is charged in consequence of a similar Vote having been given eight years ago to Melbourne; but, on the other hand, we find that debt has been cancelled by the people of New South Wales voting large sums in support of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and others held in London. Unless a similar large Vote is given for the great Centenary Exhibition to be held in Australia for Sydney and Melbourne it will cause great annoyance, and I would like to have an assurance that it will be treated similarly.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The time to consider the question whether a further grant should be made to Sydney and Melbourne will be when the Exhibi-

tion to which my hon. Friend refers takes place. I may remind him that Government, on a former occasion, made a grant of £10,000 to Sydney and Melbourne, £2,000 of which was spent at Sydney, and £8,000 being spent at Melbourne. In regard to the Exhibition about to be held at Adelaide, the Royal Commission connected with it made an application to the Government which was backed very strongly by the Colonial Office. The Government agreed to make a grant of £2,600, and subsequently a further grant of £1,000 was made for the special purpose of having exhibited there a collection of pictures by English artists. I understand that Sir Frederick Leighton, who is the President of the Department Commission, is engaged in getting together a most excellent collection, the property of the artists, and that they are to be insured by them. We shall have no risk or further responsibility, and the Government, therefore, felt that, having on a former occasion given £10,000 to Sydney and Melbourne, they could hardly on this occasion refuse to give something. I hope the hon. Member will be satisfied with this explanation.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I do not think we should be asked to Vote money for such purposes as this. Other Exhibitions have taken place in various parts of Her Majesty's Dominions, and I am not aware this House was asked to Vote sums of money in consequence. There is no doubt the Vote is put rather speciously, and the money will ultimately go towards the funds of the Exhibition. Now, Mr. Courtney, in the City of Cork, three years ago, there was an Exhibition, in which the hon. Member for the Borough of Cambridge took an active part; but we in the City of Cork put our hands in our pockets and paid our own money, and thus raised the necessary funds for making that Exhibition a very great success. We did not send the begging-bag as far as Westminster, but the people of the South of Ireland gave all the expense; and yet we are asked to contribute our quota in connection with this Adelaide Exhibition. In a country in which gold is one of the chief products they ought to be able to pay all the expense of the Exhibition themselves. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury referred to works of Art. Well, Sir, I do not think

any person would show any disposition against giving works of Art the greatest prominence; but the artists themselves, and the purchasers, may very well go to the expense of having their products exhibited either at Adelaide, Toronto, or anywhere else where works of Art are part of the show. I think this Vote unnecessary, and I must protest against undue favouritism being shown to one place as against another. So far as the City of Cork and the City of Dublin are concerned, no grant is ever made for the purpose of enabling the citizens to get up an Exhibition.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): It is not my intention to speak at any great length in connection with this Vote. The subject, Sir, is one which does not admit of any great amount of debate; but I must thoroughly endorse the remarks which have just fallen from my hon. Friend the Member for Donegal West (Mr. O'Hea). We have held Exhibitions in Ireland within the past few years, and no Vote has been passed by this House to try and assist our Exhibitions, although it is the fact that in our country manufacturers are scarce, and we require every stimulus that could possibly be given to us. In Ireland we certainly do require as much power as this House is in a position to bestow upon us in order to force Irish affairs on. Now, as to Australia, there is no reason for me to speak of the forwardness of Australia. Its motto, "Advance, Australia!" has been its leading characteristic, and it is to the fore. It is one of the most noble Colonies which any nation in the world ever possessed, and, for that reason, I should be the very last person in the world to say anything against it, or which could militate against this Vote; but what I would recommend is this, that when right hon. Gentlemen are able to put a Vote like this upon the Paper, and when they are able to promenade from one end of the country to the other talking about what they do for Ireland, they should not, when they have the power, turn their backs upon Ireland and kick her out of Court if they possibly can. That I tell them in their teeth. Well, Sir, if they do this for one country—a country that has got Home Rule, why do they not do it for Ireland? When an Irish Exhibition is brought forward—when the Cork Exhibition came on the *tapis*, or when the Dublin

Exhibition was to the fore—right hon. Gentlemen studiously neglected such undertakings, and instead of putting down in the ordinary Estimates a few thousands of pounds for them, they passed our country by. Therefore, I say in connection with this Vote that—though I do not stand up to oppose the Vote—I do stand up to oppose the hypocrisy of these right hon. Gentlemen. They come here from time to time, and they call for Votes in connection with our country in order to supply us with extra police—

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: And with extra law and order so far as they can manage it; but they do not give us the remedial measures which are absolutely necessary for the benefit and welfare of our land.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: I am not going to say a word more, Mr. Courtney, upon that point. I should be the last person to trespass upon your invariable courtesy and kindness to me. Sir, I speak the truth. I will say this much, that what I have remarked about right hon. Gentlemen is noted and known in Ireland, and some of these days it will have to be accounted for very dearly.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: Just one word, Mr. Courtney, by way of explanation. I wish to inform the Committee that the Australian people have spent £100,000 on English Exhibitions during the last few years, and, therefore, this small sum ought not to be felt or grudged.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): You have spent over £30,000 in aid of the Colonies for which you are getting no return. What you have done to-night has added £1,500, which makes the amount £31,516, and this will now be £32,500 under this Vote for the Colonies altogether. Sir, on behalf of the British taxpayer, I strongly object to all this; and I hope and trust that the economic section in this House will aid us in trying to prevent the rich Colonist from putting his hands into the pockets of the poor Mother Country; and taking away so much money from her.

Vote agreed to.

(9.) £9,306, "Telegrafo" Claims.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said: I am afraid that hardly anyone would be prepared to believe in the really extraordinary character of

this Vote. It is taken in connection with the ship *Telegrafo*, which was arrested in the year 1870 by the British Authorities at the instance of the Government of San Domingo. Anyone would imagine that by a careful reference to the Library of this House you would be able to ascertain something of the character of the proceedings, and of the history of our dealings with the Government of San Domingo in connection with this subject; but I am bound to say, that though I impressed into my service the assistance of the gentlemen in charge of the Library, we have been absolutely unable to discover in the Library any Parliamentary Paper or any Correspondence or any document whatsoever to throw any light upon this matter. At last, I felt almost ashamed to trespass upon the time and services of these gentlemen, and it was only when I began to institute a search for myself, which I carried on with great trouble, that, after going through no less than 37 volumes, I did come upon some trace of the matter. I found that the earliest reference to anything which appears to relate to it is in the Civil Service Contingencies Fund account for the year ended March 31st, 1872. That is a document which very few hon. Members would be able to trace out or even to suspect. From that it appeared that, among the then outstanding advances on the Paper, a sum of £1,664 was due to Her Majesty's Government. In the corresponding account for 1873 the first entry appears of a sum of £12,000 as the amount of further expenses incurred by the detention of the vessel *Telegrafo* at Tortola. The expenses are charged against the Government, and a claim for repayment is made against the Government of San Domingo, so that in 1873, taking the balance from the previous year's account, there was £13,900 still outstanding. From some Notes and Correspondence annexed to the Controller and Auditor General's Report it would appear that £1,864 had been paid before March, 1872. In June of that year £11,750 was paid, and in July a further sum of £299, and under the date of February 23rd, 1874, communications were still going on between Her Majesty's Government and the Governor with the view of obtaining the repayment of the claim, if possible. In the financial year 1873-4 the

matter was untouched; but in April, 1874, a further advance was made of £378 3s. 11d., making a total sum of £14,291; and at that time an offer was made to the Dominican Government with the view of settling the question; but it came to nothing, as that Government was not in a position to make any payment of any kind. In the years 1874, 1875, and 1876 matters remained in the same position, though Her Majesty's Government, through the Foreign Office, instructed the Minister to call attention to the claim, which was not abandoned. In 1877 the Treasury decided to accept, in full settlement of the claim, the following obligations from the Dominican Government:—One of 12,500 dollars, payable on the 27th June, 1877; another of 6,250 dollars, payable six months later; and a third of 6,250 dollars, payable a year after the second. In 1881 the Controller and Auditor General noted that the amount realized would be added to the Civil Service Contingencies Fund, and an Estimate was made to Parliament for the sum required to make good the balance. From the beginning to the end very nearly eight years had elapsed, and the Government had never brought the matter to the knowledge of this House. These bills were held by the British Minister at Hayti; but when the first of them was presented, in the month of June, 1877, it was dishonoured. After that Her Majesty's Treasury seem to have become alive to the fact that their position was not regular—at any rate, rather anomalous and somewhat absurd. On the 27th January, 1879, the Commissioners of the Treasury at last revealed the whole circumstances connected with the affair, and in a letter to the Controller and Auditor General they pointed out that during the insurrection in San Domingo in 1869 the *Telegrafo*, then belonging to San Domingo, was impressed by the Revolutionary Government for hostile purposes, and was afterwards sold at Tortola to a Mr. MacReverdy for 10,025 dollars. In January, 1870, she was arrested by the Colonial Authorities of the Virgin Islands, at the instance of the Government of San Domingo, and prosecuted in the Vice Admiralty Court at Tortola as a pirate vessel, under instructions from the Colonial Office, founded upon advice given by the Law Officers of the Crown to the

Foreign Office. The Court decreed restitution; but gave no costs or damages. The Crown appealed from that verdict to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, though the proceeding was a purely vexatious one, and, in point of fact, it was an attempt to break Mr. MacReverdy, by causing him enormous expenses. In 1871 the Judicial Committee gave judgment that the sentence of the Vice Admiralty Court must be affirmed; and they further directed that Mr. MacReverdy should have the costs of his appeal, but not of his adherence to it—though why that distinction was made I do not know—and there were to be no damages. In the meantime, Mr. MacReverdy brought an action against the officials of the Virgin Islands for demurrage on his vessel, amounting to £30,000. The trial came off in the Civil Court at Tortola in October, 1871; but although the Law Officers of the Crown were of opinion that the judgment was a bar to obtaining damages, that was not set forth, and the jury gave damages to the amount of £18,000, although the original cost of the vessel was only 10,000 dollars. The Colonial Government moved for a new trial; but the Chief Justice, before whom the matter came, repeatedly expressed his opinion that the plaintiff was entitled to substantial damages, and counsel agreed to a compromise, under which Mr. MacReverdy was to receive £11,500 damages and £250 costs. Now, the San Domingan Government had, in July, 1869, undertaken that the British Government should be held harmless for the arrest of the vessel; so a claim was made for that sum and expenses, which raised the amount to £14,259. As to the bills which were ultimately given by the San Domingan Government; on the presentation of the bill which fell due on the 27th of June, 1877, Her Majesty's Representative at Port-au-Prince was informed that the Government were unable to meet their engagements, and that the President owed 200,000 dollars to the Domingan Government. In reporting these circumstances, Mr. Stewart observed that the Customs Duties for the City of San Domingo alone amounted, for the first six months of 1877, to 45,000 dollars; but all salaries were in arrear, and he appeared to be of opinion that the President had carried

70,000 dollars out of the country, and suspended all payments, in order to obtain enough to buy an estate whenever the inhabitants refused to obey his rule any longer. Other payments were also dishonoured; and Her Majesty's Government were then informed that the late President having left the Treasury empty, the present Government of San Domingo had no means of meeting the claim; but they proposed to set apart one-tenth of the import duties as a reserve fund, out of which to pay the amount which Her Majesty's Government had agreed to accept, and the Treasury therefore inquired what steps the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would take. Lord Salisbury, who was then Foreign Minister, said it was not possible to judge then what was the probability of recovering from the San Domingan Government the sum awarded, or whether any measures were to be taken to enforce payment. The Lords of the Treasury declared that they had little hope that the Government of San Domingo would experience any anxiety to discharge its obligations; but they were unwilling to ask Parliament to vote the money until the Secretary of State informed them that, in his opinion, the Domingan Government would not pay, and that he was not prepared to enforce payment. In the last paragraph of their letter, which I confess I do not understand, the Lords of the Treasury declared that the Imperial Government had itself been guilty of no *laches* in harbouring a piratical vessel or otherwise; but, unfortunately, it endeavoured to oblige a friendly Government without demanding a deposit to cover expenses. Excessive damages were given, which the Imperial Government did not feel able to resist—and the result was a loss of £14,000 to the Imperial Exchequer, which was likely to prove a bad debt. So that, eight years ago, the Treasury were well aware that there was no prospect of recovering the money. Under these circumstances, the House ought not to have been kept so long in ignorance of the state of affairs. If this is a kind of thing which can be allowed to go on, hidden away in documents little known, and to which few people have access, we shall find some fine day that the Government have embarked in transactions of a very extensive character, in regard to which the House is altogether

without information. The next thing we find is, not any payment on account from the Government of San Domingo, but a further sum of £9 12s. 0d., notary's charges for protesting the dishonoured bills of the Government. In March, 1880, the Treasurer informed the Controller and Auditor General that the Domingan Government had proposed to pay all foreign claims, including the liability of £14,300, by means of an extra tax of 2 per cent upon imports. The Lords of the Treasury consented to that arrangement; but the Government which proposed it since fell, and upon its fall disposed of the amount collected upon that extra tax. The whole of the story is one long series of absurdities on the part of Her Majesty's Government in trusting what they must have known were parties utterly unable to meet the obligations which they had undertaken. Since then a proposal has been made by the Controller and Auditor General, and supported by the Secretary of State, that upon some security, the proceeds of the suggested tax should be placed in the hands of certain merchants, to be by them distributed to the persons entitled, and the Lords of the Treasury agreed to that; so that it comes to this, that between such high contracting parties as the Government of San Domingo and Her Majesty's Government there were intermediaries—private persons—upon whom they had no check whatever, who were not to be responsible, with whom they make bargains on percentages to collect bad debts. If that is proper or becoming, we have got into days when nations are very different from what they were. In 1880, the patience of the Government was rewarded by obtaining a sum of £891 5s. 0d., and so it went on in a hand-to-mouth fashion, small sums being repaid, and the payments were varied occasionally by additional liabilities for notarial fees on dishonoured bills. The end of the whole story is that we now have a charge of £9,000 on the taxpayer which ought not to appear now, for it should have been paid off years and years ago as soon as it was found that the Domingan Government could not possibly meet its obligations. You have had this carrying on of a fictitious balance to the Civil Service Contingencies Fund, which you must have known you would have in the end to wipe off. I do not think it reflects very

much credit upon any of the long series of Official Secretaries or Treasury Officials, who are responsible for it. I should like very much to ask, not only in regard to this Vote, but in regard to a previous Vote of Compensation due to certain American vessels seized in 1854 on suspicion of being slavers, whether there are still upon the Treasury account books any outstanding claims of this kind which will have to be written off sooner or later, as due to injured parties, or balances looked upon as quite irrecoverable?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I feel exceedingly obliged to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. A. O'Connor) for having stated so clearly and so conclusively the whole of the facts of this case. I think, however, that he stated that the vessel was arrested at the instance of the Colonial Government. Now, according to my information, it was arrested at the instance of the Government of San Domingo, but in reference to the other portion of his statement, the hon. Gentleman has stated with complete accuracy the full history of the case; and the only point I disagree with is his conclusion, that it would have been better if we had wiped the claim off years ago. If that had been done, we should not have got the £5,000 which we have received. Really it comes to this, that in 1872 the Government for whom we had acted, and who were responsible, avowed their responsibility and their intention to pay. In 1874 negotiations were carried on, and at that time the British Government thought so badly of their claim of £14,000, that they agreed to accept in full discharge a sum of £2,500. That £2,500 was not raised in consequence of financial embarrassments; and subsequently, in 1876, it was agreed between the two Governments to accept a sum of £5,000 in full discharge. That ought to have been paid in 1877-8, but it was not paid in consequence of financial embarrassments. In 1880, however, they commenced to pay, and in 1886 they completed the last payment, making up the £5,000; and, immediately on the completion of that, the question was brought forward to wipe off the balance so far as the Treasury were concerned. They have now brought this to a satisfactory issue, and I do not think I need detain the

Committee any further on the subject.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The words I used were not my words, but the words of the Treasury, under date January 3, 1879, and they are signed, "R. R. Lingen." They state that the *Telegrafo* was arrested at the instance of the Government at San Domingo. I read out these words, and the letter goes on to say that—

"She was prosecuted in the Vice Admiralty Court at Tortola as a pirate vessel, under instructions from the Colonial Office, founded upon advice given by the law officers of the Crown to the Foreign Office."

My complaint is that when in 1877 the Government agreed that on payment of the £5,000 they would forego their claim or reduce it to that £5,000, it was their duty to let this House know it, then and there, and apply to Parliament for the necessary balance.

Vote agreed to.

(10.) £147, Treasury Chest Robbery.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I should like to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) for some explanation respecting this Vote. Why should the Imperial Government pay for losses occasioned by a breach of duty on the part of the officials of the Indian Government? Our charges in regard to India are so many that I am certainly astonished that the Imperial Government should ask us to pay any fresh Indian charge. I must admit that if I could pay money cheerfully for any of our Dependencies it would be for India, but I should like to know what is the reason why India should not pay this sum herself?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I think that when the hon. Member knows the facts he will see that this is not a charge which ought to be borne by the Indian Government. The occurrence took place at Trincomalee, in Ceylon, and the circumstances are these. An official went down to the strong room and brought up 2,000 rupees, with which to pay some accounts. The men to whom the money was due did not call for it on that particular day. The officer therefore locked the money up in a safe of which he supposed he had the only key. It was discovered the next day that the

safe had been opened, and the money was gone. An investigation took place, the result being to show that during the term of office of the officer's predecessor there was a duplicate key to the safe. That duplicate key was lost on the death of the predecessor. Put shortly, therefore, the explanation amounts to this, that somebody had the duplicate key, opened the safe with it, and stole the money. The Government feel that the officer who put the money in the safe was not to blame, and they, therefore, ask the Committee to agree to the Vote.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Mr. Courtney, this is a very small item, and the whole affair appears to me to be very simple. But with regard to the duplicate key, it appears to have been brought into existence during the term of office of a predecessor of the present holder of the post. Surely if the money was stolen through that predecessor's want of capacity, or through any negligence on his part in allowing the duplicate key to pass out of his possession, the loss ought to be made good—

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. Gentleman will be satisfied if I tell him that the officer to whom he refers is dead.

DR. TANNER: I can assure you, Mr. Courtney, I was not acquainted with the poor gentleman. I am sorry he is dead. At any rate, even granting that point, I would ask what would happen if a sum of money were stolen in the same way from the Treasury chest in Ireland. In this case the event occurred, as I understand, in Ceylon. But suppose it had occurred in any other portion of Her Majesty's Dominions—say in Ireland—what would be the result? Why, the local rates would have to make good the loss. It appears that there has been a certain laxity in connection with the management of these affairs. [*Ministerial laughter.*] I am delighted that Gentlemen opposite take so much interest in this case as to laugh at it. I would, however, remind them that it is no laughing matter for the taxpayers of the country. It appears, I say, that there has been a certain amount of laxity in connection with the proceedings which led to this robbery, and I should say that, instead of asking this Committee to pass this Vote, the Government ought to have

levied it upon the district in which the robbery took place. I would, without any hesitation, recommend the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to refer this matter to the local authorities, and ask them to pay the money.

Vote agreed to.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg, Mr. Courtney, to move that you do report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(Mr. Edmund Robertson).

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I hope the hon. Member will be so good as to allow the next Vote to be taken. I think I may say that there was an understanding on both sides of the House that it should be disposed of to-night. The understanding has been most fairly carried out by hon. Gentlemen hitherto, and I am exceedingly obliged to them for it. I am sure the Committee will see that it will be for the convenience of the Public Service if the understanding is carried out in its entirety.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I have a suggestion to make as to the Post Office Vote. The Vote is almost always taken at a very late hour, when no proper discussion can take place. I would venture to suggest that the Vote should be taken first in the coming year, so that it can be fairly discussed. If such an arrangement can be made, I think it will be possible to take that Vote to-night.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I think the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman is a reasonable one, and I will endeavour, as far as I can, to carry it out.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Mr. Courtney, I wish to put a question to you on a point of Order. I am desirous to know whether any hon. or right hon. Gentleman in this House is entitled to ask in an audible voice, "Who is the animal?" referring to another hon. Member?

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) press his Motion to report Progress.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: No, Sir.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Dr. Tanner

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

(11) £236,000, Supplementary, Post Office.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I shall not press you, Mr. Courtney, for a ruling as to the remark which I mentioned just now. It was with regard to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson). I shall pass it by with the contempt it deserves. On this Vote I desire to bring forward a slight grievance respecting the Post Office in Cork.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge): I rise to ask you a question, Sir. My hon. Friend (Mr. John O'Connor) is referring to Ireland. I wish to know whether I shall be in Order in referring to England and Wales after he has dealt with Ireland?

THE CHAIRMAN: If otherwise in Order, it would not be out of Order because taken after Ireland. I cannot say whether it would be in Order until I hear what it is.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: I will give way to the hon. Member.

MR. CONYBEARE: I believe the remarks I have to make, and which will be very brief, will be perfectly in Order. I wish to refer to a matter connected with Vote C. 1, which relates to the salaries and expenses of postmasters, clerks, &c. I should not have troubled the Committee with the question at all if I had been able to bring it under the notice of the Postmaster General in the shape of a Question, as I wished. But when I attempted to do so, I was informed that, in the exercise of the discretion which the clerks at the Table possess, they could not allow my Question to appear on the Paper, and, therefore, I am obliged to take this opportunity of bringing the subject forward. The facts are, briefly, these. A gentleman named Archibald Vicar, who is connected with the Post Office in the Manchester District, has received his notice of discharge under circumstances which appear to me to demand some inquiry, and to indicate that he has not been fairly treated. This gentleman happened to be visiting Glenbeigh at the time I was there, and I met him and made his personal acquaintance. It appears that since his return to Manchester there has come under his notice

some of those interesting leaflets published by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, and containing some of the usually truthful statements—the exceedingly truthful statements—respecting the evictions at Glenbeigh which that well-known and exceedingly truthful journal, *The St. James's Gazette*, is in the habit of publishing. This gentleman, having been on the scene of the Glenbeigh evictions, wrote a letter to *The Manchester Guardian*, in which appeared this sentence—

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the hon. Member connects this with the Vote, unless he is prepared to say that the gentleman in question had his services provided for under Vote C 1. This is a Supplementary Vote. Of course the salaries of persons on the establishment of the Post Office are provided for in the regular Estimates.

MR. CONYBEARE: I take it, Sir, that this Supplementary Vote refers to the clerks in the service of the Post Office during the past year.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Original and Main Vote would do so, but I do not think the present Supplementary Votes would.

MR. CONYBEARE: Well, Sir, I do not know how many clerks there are in the Post Office. It would be very difficult for me to prove that this gentleman's salary, or any one sixpence of it, is included in a particular Vote. I think your ruling, Sir, would be, if I may so say, rather hard upon me.

THE CHAIRMAN: The presumption evidently would be that the salaries of clerks in this office are provided for in the Main Estimates. It would be an exception if they appeared in these Supplementary Estimates. It lies on the hon. Member to establish the exception.

MR. CONYBEARE: I will not press the point, but I will urge, as my reason for raising it at all, that this gentleman received notice of his discharge some weeks ago, and that no one can tell when the Main Estimates will come on. I have endeavoured to bring the matter under the notice of the Postmaster General but have been foiled, and, therefore, I was anxious to avail myself of this opportunity of stating the grievance. However, I do not wish to detain the Committee, and I will merely ask that, as I have been refused permission to

put a Question in the House to the Postmaster General on the subject, the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to bring the matter before him privately. [The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) signified assent.] I may mention another matter in connection with postmen in the County of Cornwall, and will ask leave to bring that subject before the Postmaster General also.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The question to which the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) has just alluded affects the rural postmen not only in Cornwall, but throughout the United Kingdom. Their wages are charged for in this Vote. Their case is one of exceptional hardship, because they do not receive the same amount of salary as their fellows in the towns, although their duties are much harder. Their wages amount only to 15s. or 16s. a week, and sometimes are as low as 12s. They have greater distances to go than the postmen in the towns. The roads they have to traverse are nothing like as good as those in towns, and they have far heavier burdens to carry. In other branches of the Service—the Excise for instance—where men have to go long distances and to be away from home at the time of the mid-day meal, some kind of subsistence allowance is granted to them. The rural postman has nothing of the kind, although he is obliged to be from home from early morning till late at night, and is, therefore, forced to get his food away from home. This seems a small matter, but it is a very important item in the domestic economy of a man with a salary of only 15s. a week. Lately, the rural postmen have had a great number of new duties imposed upon them in connection with the weighing of letters, the sale of stamps, the weighing of parcels and the carrying of parcels. In connection with the carrying of parcels, it must be remembered that before they were bound to do this work they used to eke out their slender salaries by carrying parcels on their own account, and the result of the new regulations has, therefore, been to diminish their earnings. There is also a great grievance in connection with the way in which the system of having only a limited number of stripes works out. In one place there may be a considerate postmaster, who will press a man forward

as deserving of a stripe, and the man will get it at the end of five years' service. Another man in a district close by applies for a stripe after seven years' service, and is told that as the number of stripes is limited he cannot have one; and he finds that, instead of five or seven years, he may have to serve as long as 12 years before he obtains a stripe. This system of having a limited number of stripes is, therefore, very unfair. The number of men who are eligible for stripes, or who would be eligible if the number was not limited, is constantly increasing, and the grievance is therefore growing day by day. I trust that the Postmaster General will be able to give us some assurance that the condition of these poor men will be ameliorated.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to make some remarks respecting the condition and the wages of postmen in Cork. In that town, postmen are not eligible for promotion to the position of letter-sorters and to other positions of that kind, although in other offices all over the country they are eligible for such promotion. We all know what an incentive promotion is to men in the public service to do their duty well. There is also a grievance in regard to sick pay in the Cork Post Office. In Cork, the men only receive half-pay when they are sick, although in the Dublin Post Office the married men receive full pay when sick, and the single men three-quarter's pay. The grievance is all the greater because of the fact that the salaries of the men employed as postmen in the Cork Office are 25 per cent lower than the salaries received by the postmen in other offices of a like status. This, though a small grievance, is a substantial one; and I believe it is only necessary to bring it under the notice of the Postmaster General to have it inquired into.

MR. J. BARRY (Wexford, S.): I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has brought the question of the condition of the Irish postmen under the attention of the Committee. For several years past we have had discussions on the subject, and suggestions have been made that something should be done to increase the miserably inadequate pay of the Irish postmen. The present system operates harshly, not only on the postmen in Ireland, but also upon the tem-

porary letter-carriers, who are treated even worse than the postmen. I know cases in which men have acted as temporary carriers for 20 years. They have to walk distances of 20 miles a day, and their wages do not exceed 10s. or 11s. a-week. It is quite a mistake, therefore, to suppose that their duties are light; and they have to undertake serious responsibilities, because at certain times they have to carry letters containing large sums of money. It is highly creditable to them, as a class, that so few cases of robbery or defalcation take place. The distances traversed in my own county are sometimes very great. In one case it amounts to 25 miles a-day, and in that case the wages paid to the carrier certainly do not exceed 11s. a-week. It is altogether unworthy of a great Department like the Post Office to continue men in the position of temporary letter-carriers for several years. What objection can there be to putting them on the permanent staff, and advancing their wages 4s. or 5s. a-week? I certainly hope the present Postmaster General will give this matter his earnest attention, and see if something cannot be done to improve the position of this most deserving class of men.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I desire to emphasize the remarks which have been made by my hon. Friends as to the position of the Irish postmen. Some time ago, Questions on the subject of the Cork letter-carriers were addressed to the then Postmaster General. The grievances I wish to bring before the Committee are three or four in number. In the first place, the letter-carriers complain that Cork is classed as a first-class office, and that the postmen receive second-class pay. In addition to this, they are most unfairly treated as regards stripes and promotion; and another grievance is, that they only receive half-pay when they are sick. They complain, further, that in Cork they have a larger amount of work to get through than the same class of men in Belfast or Dublin, and that they have to work longer hours. Besides this, they are obliged to work on Sundays all the year round. In Belfast, I understand, the carriers have the Sundays to themselves, and in Dublin they have two or three out of the four. We should like to know, from the Postmaster General, if

the inquiry promised last year by the late Government has been held, and, if it has been held, have any recommendations been made to the Department, or, if not, is there any probability of the inquiry being held soon?

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): The services of these men cannot, I think, under any circumstances, be over-rated. We have here a very large sum to be voted under this particular Estimate; and it must be admitted that among the recipients of State pay there is no more deserving class than these men. I do not mean to travel beyond any particular radius; but in my constituency (Donegal) there are postmen and letter-carriers who have to walk 10 or 12 miles, and who, during the 24 hours, have to walk, I dare say, 20 Irish miles. It would be a great injustice to this class to have any reduction made in their salaries. I know a great deal about the rural districts in Donegal, and I know the work these men have to do, in sunshine and storm, in rain or snow, from one year's end to the other. If there is any increase of salary which lies within the discretion of the Postmaster General, or whoever is the head of the Department, the claims of this deserving class of public servants should not be ignored.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I am glad we are to have another opportunity of discussing questions that arise out of this Vote, and I will now only give Notice of one or two points that will receive attention. Under head G 15, I notice an item, £1,300, for a new and extended mail cart service; and in reference to this I should like to ask why special facilities are given, why favouritism is shown in the allocation of these contractors, whereby old contractors are left out? In my own constituency, the Thurso and Castleton mail express was contracted for by a man two years ago; but he had no opportunity of tendering for the new contract. I want to know if these contracts are all publicly advertised? Then, again, I should like to mention the mail service to the North. The Wick and Thurso morning mail from London only arrives an hour before the evening mail leaves. We want to induce the Postmaster General to give the same facilities as are afforded by the evening mail service, and this is a point that will be raised when the time comes for discussion.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): I should like to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the difficulties that are encountered in some parts of Scotland with reference to founding Post Office Savings' Banks in rural districts. In a Northern constituency there have been two applications made for the establishment of a savings' bank; but they have been refused. In one village there are some 300 or 400 houses and a population of 1,800 or 1,900 people; and I cannot help thinking that the Post Office would do well to promote habits of thrift by encouraging the establishment of savings' banks among the villagers. I hope the Department will consider this, even though there may be some slight loss. I do not know that there would be any loss in the two cases of Archieston and Dallas, which were brought to the notice of the Post Office Authorities.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman rises I should like to ask him to be good enough to explain the large additions to the original Vote for sites; there is an addition of £122,000 in one instance, and £126,000 in another; the original sums being £60,000 and £74,000. May I ask what were the unforeseen circumstances that led to this very large additional expenditure?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have carefully noted the various points raised, and am very glad to have the opportunity of giving what answers I can. As to the matter raised by the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), I shall be extremely glad to receive any representation he will be good enough to make. As to the general question of rural postmen, especially in Ireland, which has been pressed upon my attention by several hon. Members, I would point out that during the last few years something has been done to improve the position of these very deserving public servants. I entirely concur in all that has been said of the excellent character borne, and the important public services rendered, by these men. I think, considering their responsibilities, the sums of money entrusted to their care, and certainly the very moderate wages they receive, the high character they bear, and the rare occasions when any of them are found unworthy of the

trust reposed in them, they deserve recognition. Of course, the wages of any large class of employes are ruled by the consideration of what is sufficient to attract good men. When you find you are well served at a particular price, the Department would be hardly justified in coming to this House and asking for a grant of money to raise the salaries. Particular cases are constantly under consideration, particularly in Ireland during the last three years, and there has been a general tendency to raise the wages of rural postmen. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) referred to the question of good-service stripes, and the loss to men from the institution of the parcel post. I sympathise with the men who have been deprived of a small source of emolument they used to enjoy by the institution of the parcel post; but there is a certain amount of compensation, in some instances, from a slight though constant increase of pay in the place of what was formerly a casual employment. Having regard to the very great advantage the parcel post has been to the country, the wonderful strides it has made in public favour, minor and private interests must give way. As to the distribution of stripes, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the view which at different times has been pressed upon the Post Office, that the number of these stripes should be increased, so as to bear a larger proportion to the number of men in the Force. At the present time it is strictly limited to a particular number; therefore, though a man may have earned his stripe he may have to wait some time for a vacancy before it can be obtained, and this is said to have a discouraging effect on the men. I shall be extremely glad if I can arrive at some system to make the distribution of stripes more regular among the men. An hon. Member spoke of the question of Cork Post Office, and I have to say there has been an inquiry into the status of the men employed there. I am informed that the result was to prove that, although they do not receive the same pay and allowances as their brethren in Dublin, they do receive the same pay and allowances as obtain in other Offices of the same class. But I will look into the matter again and see if there is any real grievance to be redressed. The hon.

Member for South Wexford (Mr. Barry) said something about the position of temporary letter-carriers. They occupy a position, no doubt, not so good as established postmen; but if they are allowed to remain in that position it is an advantage to them, for they could not, in most instances, become established postmen, because they are not eligible. In many cases the men are above the prescribed age, and in other cases they are below that age. In the latter case it is possible they may become established letter-carriers, but in the other case their eligibility becomes less and less. A question has been raised by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) in regard to Scotch mail cart contracts. I am not aware of any instances where such contracts have not been exposed to public competition. There may have been cases of a special character, but I am quite aware that it is proper and desirable there should be public invitation of tenders. As to the mail train service, I think I remember something about that, and there is a certain amount of correspondence on the subject. I am afraid the cost to the Revenue of an acceleration of the morning service would hardly be justifiable. There is a good evening service, but the morning mails have to be sent by trains that stop much more frequently. The Department is always trying to accelerate the mail service, and you may be sure that if an opportunity offers for accelerating the morning service, without increasing the cost and producing a loss that is not justifiable, we shall take advantage of that opportunity. Another hon. Gentleman referred to Post Office Savings' Banks. I think it is very desirable to multiply Post Office Savings' Banks as far as possible, and I think some recent disclosures have deepened that conviction in the minds of persons who take an interest in this question. There are, however, some cases where it is undesirable to open Post Office Savings' Banks, having regard to the qualifications of the local postmaster or postmistress. In some cases where these are equal to the routine business of receiving and despatching letters, they would not be equal to the more responsible duty of keeping a savings' bank. But I think with the hon. Member, that wherever an opportunity offers we should extend the system of savings' banks, and I shall

be very happy to entertain and consider any representation that hon. Members may make in this direction. A really important question, one of first-class importance, was that raised by the hon. Member for South Wexford, and one upon which I expected a great deal more would have been said. I am glad he has asked the question, because there is no doubt its importance deserves the consideration of the Committee. The very large addition, amounting altogether to £200,000, to be provided for sites for post and telegraph offices, represents as closely as possible the sum which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the late Government were in Office last year, struck off the Estimates which were submitted by the Post Office. The Committee will recollect that in 1885 there was passed the Post Office Sites Act, which gave the Government the means of extending the premises of the General Post Office. When the Act was passed the Treasury proceeded to sanction the service of notices on owners of property in the locality. Those persons being served, became entitled to receive the purchase money as soon as the sums were decided by arbitration. The Authorities at the Post Office, including my Predecessor, now the Chancellor of the Duchy, arrived at the conclusion that it would be necessary in carrying out the plans to spend £443,000 in the acquisition of sites in the course of that financial year; but when the Estimates were submitted to the Treasury, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer—for there had been a change of Government in the meantime, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) was Chancellor—had, or imagined he had, good ground for assuming that the sum would not be expended in the course of the current year, and with a stroke of his pen he knocked off £200,000 from the Estimates submitted by the Post Office Authorities. But although it was very easy to remove that sum from the Estimates, it was not equally easy to lessen the liability of the Post Office to that extent, as the Post Office was bound to complete the purchases as soon as the arbitration was over. It has turned out that the Post Office made a wonderfully correct calculation; and the mistake of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer was in

exact proportion to the accuracy of the Post Office, as that very sum of £200,000 must come in course of payment during the financial year. The Post Office had foreseen this, and the sum now asked for is the same that ought to have been included in the ordinary Estimates for the year. I think nothing more need be said on this point at present. I rather expected that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby would have been here, and, I hoped, would have explained the situation, and how it was that such a curious financial method should have found favour in his eyes. But the hon. Member for South Wexford has given me the opportunity of explanation, and I am glad to have had the opportunity of showing that, although the sum is very large, it has been an automatic expenditure fixed on the Post Office by the Act of 1885. Why it was not foreseen by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is rather a matter for that right hon. Gentleman to explain than myself. With regard to the other expenditure included in the Estimate, I have only to say I think the Committee will be glad to hear that the additional expenditure on the establishment represents additional earnings. The additional £110,000 expended on the establishment represents an increase of £160,000 in estimated revenue. It is hoped, therefore, that though the sum is considerable, it will be much more than covered by revenue accruing in the course of the year in excess of the calculation made in the spring of last year. Something has been said of the telegraph system; but I will not enter into that now. I will take an opportunity of doing so on the general Estimates; but the immense extension of the telegraph system has brought on a corresponding additional cost. And now I think I have gone through the various points raised in discussion.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): May I ask, will the £200,000 complete the purchase of the sites?

MR. RAIKES: Not entirely; there is another large sum to be paid; but this will complete the purchase of those sites which were estimated for by the Post Office last year as requiring completion in the course of this financial year.

MR. BARRY: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his clear explana-

tion, which to me is quite satisfactory, although it indicates a very peculiar method of finance. I would just like to ask, if I am in order in doing so, in relation to transactions of a more than ordinary magnitude. I would ask, if I am in Order, can the right hon. Gentleman give the Committee any idea of the cost of the arbitrations referred to? I have reason to believe that in this particular case the cost was excessive—very large indeed. If the right hon. Gentleman could give any details on the point they would be interesting. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is not prepared with the information now? Then I will take an opportunity of repeating my question when the ordinary Estimates are under discussion.

Vote agreed to.

(12) £122,000, Supplementary, Post Office Telegraphs.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can tell us what the increase of Telegraph revenue is estimated at? We understood last year that upon the introduction of the sixpenny telegrams there would be a loss of revenue in the present year of from £10,000 to £20,000, but, I understand, there has actually been a very large increase of business, so that not only has the loss of revenue not been realised, but there has been a large increase of income. I should like to know the total.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The right hon. gentleman has correctly surmised the result. I may say that when the Estimates for the present financial year were prepared it was then feared that the Telegraph revenue would be £20,000 less than last year, but we have realized a sum of £80,000 more than last year, that is to say, about £100,000 in excess of the Estimate.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.): May I ask if any attention has been given to the development of the Telephone system or dealing with overhead wires?

MR. RAIKES: There have been no special negotiations in progress in regard to Telephones, nor do I anticipate that it will be desirable to take up that question during the present year—there are sufficient reasons for postponing it. As to overhead wires, no doubt it is a subject

that has been forced on our consideration by the great damage caused by the snow during the winter. In different directions there have been extensions of the underground system, but generally in the Department opinion is in favour of retaining overhead wires because they are very much cheaper, and on the whole it is thought desirable to retain that system even in view of an occasional dislocation such as occurred at Christmas last. The expenditure for remodelling the whole system would be so great that I do not think the most extravagant House of Commons would be expected to sanction it.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*.

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday*.

FIRST OFFENDERS BILL.—[BILL 132.]

(*Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Addison, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to move that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, and I do so in order that certain Amendments may be introduced, and that the Bill may be reprinted and circulated with a view to its recommittal.

Motion made and Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," —(*Mr. Howard Vincent*)—put, and *agreed to*.

Bill considered in Committee, and reported; to be printed, as amended [Bill 189]; re-committed for *Monday* next.

LICENSED PREMISES (EARLIER CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*Dr. Cameron, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. Mark Stewart, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Lyell, Mr. Provand.*)

[BILL 153.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): At this late hour, I will not, of course, trouble the House with any lengthened explanation of the objects of the Bill. Briefly, the object is to close licensed premises in Scotland at an earlier hour

than is required at present. The hour named in the Bill is 10, instead of 11 for public-houses, and 8 in the case of licensed grocers, 10 on Saturdays. The earlier hours for grocers' premises is in accordance with the desire of some leading representatives of the trade; and since the Bill was introduced hearty Petitions in its favour have been sent from the Association of Licensed Grocers of Edinburgh and Leith. The Bill was introduced some Sessions ago; but was blocked, and never had an opportunity of being divided upon. The present Bill has also for some days past had a block against it, though not from a Member representing any Scotch constituency. Of course, he was perfectly within his right in blocking it; but it is proper that the House should know that no Scottish Representative has thought it his duty to oppose the Bill, and that among Scotch Members there is a great preponderance of opinion in favour of the Bill, the second reading of which I now move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned. The Bill requires more attention than we can give it now. I know that it relates to Scotland; but it has a bearing on the general question which should be dealt with in a general measure. From what I know of the restrictions placed upon the sale of liquor in Scotland, they have not been attended with any very beneficial result, neither have they in Wales. This proposal for a still further restriction in Scotland, whether it be beneficial or not, is worthy of debate; it refers to a class of legislation for the three countries, and is not to be disposed of in this summary manner.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Colonel Hughes.*)

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Without troubling the House for long, and imitating the brevity with which the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has moved the second reading, I rise to corroborate him, and express my belief that it is the general opinion in Scotland that this principle should be affirmed,

and that this Bill should be read a second time. I feel assured that a large majority of the Scotch Members will support it.

DR. CAMERON: Since a Division is to be taken, I may say we will consider it, for all practical purposes, a Division upon the Bill.

Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question again proposed.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): This Bill unquestionably deals with a very large subject; and I am quite clear about this—that whatever opinions hon. Members may express on the subject, and whatever their belief as to the general opinion in Scotland on the matter, as far as I know there has been no matured opinion in Scotland at all; the proposal has not come before the constituencies in any marked manner. I would point out to the House that the Bill deals with a matter that must unquestionably be dealt with in the larger scheme that must come within the scope of general measures dealing with Local Government in England, Scotland, and Ireland. No doubt, in some parts of Scotland, it would be an advantage to have these shortened hours for licensed houses; but whether such a provision is equally applicable to the whole country, and particularly the large towns, is quite another question. I would suggest that, at this time, the second reading should not be pressed. It is quite impossible that matters of this kind should be dealt with in a piecemeal way. The Bill is of a sweeping character; it is for the purpose of closing all public-houses in Scotland at an earlier hour than they now close, and it is absolutely necessary that the House should know what is the feeling in Scotland on the subject before we proceed with such a Bill as this. The subject must be dealt with, as I said before, in a totally different way. The whole tendency of the present time is towards the subject being dealt with in a comprehensive scheme of local government. If the Second Reading Motion is pressed now, I must be under the necessity of again moving the adjournment.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate says there is no matured

opinion in Scotland on this subject; but I desire to say there is no subject upon which my constituents have made known their wishes with more precision; and I have no doubt many other Members have had a similar experience. I will not go into the merits of the Bill now. I will only say that if a large system of local government really were proposed dealing with the subject in an effectual way, I have very little doubt that those in charge of the Bill before the House would be prepared to withdraw it in favour of the more effective method.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I must express my regret that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has seen fit to oppose the second reading of this Bill. I regret that a Motion for Adjournment should have been moved from this side, when a large majority of the Representatives of the people interested are in favour of the measure. I think it is by such opposition that the spirit of Home Rule is encouraged. I, therefore, desire heartily and cordially to support the Motion of the hon. Member opposite (Dr. Cameron).

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): When this Bill was before the House in 1885, I expressed myself in favour of it, though I also expressed my preference for having the subject dealt with in a general scheme of local government. I was, and am, ready to accept the principle of Local Option in any form. My adherence to the principle of Local Option induces me to oppose the restrictions in the Bill. I agree with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that a measure of this sort ought not to be discussed apart from the large measure in which it needs must be included, and I shall support the Adjournment.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): Not only are we informed by the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that public opinion on this measure is not matured; but the House of Commons is not given the benefit of any detailed explanation of the provision of the Bill, or of the grounds upon which it is proposed. I do not think that hon. Members can expect us, without good reasons being given, to agree to a measure that seriously restricts liberty in Scotland, and without knowing what the feeling in Scotland really is. I hope the view

of the Lord Advocate will be adopted; and to give the House the opportunity of expressing an opinion, I move the Adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."
—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

MR. E. R. RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The noble Lord opposite (*Viscount Cranborne*) need be under no apprehension for the liberties of Scotland. Scotland has Representatives; and even if this were not so, the people of Scotland are perfectly competent to look after their own freedom. We are sometimes puzzled on this side of the House to know what there is in the position of the noble Lord to make him so exceedingly pugnacious on this particular subject. Unless it be that he represents—

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I rise to Order. Are these observations pertinent to a Motion for Adjournment?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member (*Mr. Russell*) will bear in mind the Motion before the House is the Adjournment of the Debate.

MR. E. R. RUSSELL: I quite submit to your ruling, Sir, but the noble Lord said, the rights and liberties of Scotland were in danger; and I wish to point out there is no danger of the kind, and that that, therefore, cannot be urged in favour of an Adjournment of the Debate under the circumstances. Perhaps the noble Lord, as representative of a principle stated in this House before—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member would not be in Order in continuing those remarks.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): I hope this Motion for Adjournment will be withdrawn. The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has expressed his desire to know the opinion of Scotland, and that, I understand, is the ground upon which the noble Lord opposite bases his Motion. But I think that, with one exception, all hon. Members for Scotland will vote in favour of this Bill. The Lord Advocate is in his usual unfortunate position of not knowing what the opinion of Scotland is. I think it will be expressed in the Division List, if we are allowed to Divide.

MR. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): I am glad to hear my hon. Friend (*Mr. E.*

Robertson) express himself in favour of Local Option; but that is no reason why he should not support the Bill. It is a small Bill, and universally approved in Scotland, notwithstanding what the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has said. I have heard no dissentient voice raised against it, and we have had no Petitions against it, and if there have not been a great many in its favour it is because it was taken for granted the Bill would pass. As to waiting for the Local Government Bill, I can only say that we have waited for that Bill so long that there is every reason to pass this Bill now, including the provisions of it in the Local Government Bill afterwards.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): As to the question of restricting rights, public-houses will be allowed to be open until 10—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled, on a Motion for Adjournment, to discuss the merits of the Bill.

DR. CLARK: The question is simply this, whether this matter has been sprung upon the House and the country, or whether the opinion of Scotland has been taken. The ground taken up in favour of adjournment is not tenable. We have had an expression of opinion from Scotch Members all in favour of the measure, the only Member who has spoken on the other side being the hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson), and he has spoken because the question came before him in his constituency, and he pledged himself to go against the measure. All other Members on both sides of the House have been in favour of the Bill, and have expressed the wish of their constituents. I think it is very undesirable that English Members should interfere, and prevent a Scotch question being discussed by Scotch Members, when from both sides there is a feeling in favour of the discussion.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I shall vote against the Motion for Adjournment, although I am opposed to the principle of the measure. But I think that hon. Members from Scotland are entitled to discuss any Bill they may bring forward, and I protest against the Government trying to check that discussion.

SIR ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Renfrew, W.): I must say I hope this Motion for Adjournment will be withdrawn. Although one could have wished to

have had this Bill considered at an earlier hour, yet I feel sure from the silence of those from whom we might have expected opposition, that there is a strong desire the Bill should pass. It would be a great pity to burke that desire by a Motion for Adjournment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I will venture to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie), well aware, as he is, of the few opportunities private Members have of bringing on any question, to exercise his influence with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, who, of course, has opinions for which we all have the greatest respect, except in relation to Scotch matters, for he does not understand the feeling of Scotland. On this side, we are entitled to say we find the expression of Scotch opinion; and seeing the opinion expressed in favour of the Bill, I venture to think it would be a graceful thing for the Government to allow this small Bill to pass its second reading, seeing that there is no opposition to the principle of the measure.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The reason why the noble Lord opposite (Viscount Cranborne) moved the Adjournment was, that there had been no attempt to discuss the question or to enlighten the House as to the reason why these proposals were now urged. I will venture to say there are very few Members of the House who expected a Bill of this kind, involving such grave principles, would come on so late at night. The moving the Adjournment of the Debate was in order to invite the House to express an opinion as to whether, under these circumstances, the House should be asked now to come to a decision on the principle of the Bill. I do not understand that the noble Lord, or any other hon. Member, has any desire to weary the House with constant Motions for Adjournment. It is with a view of giving the House an opportunity of saying if a question of this magnitude should be discussed and decided at this hour.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 112; Noes 100: Majority 12.—(Div. List, No. 45.)

Debate adjourned till Wednesday.

COUNTY COURTS [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Expenses that may become payable under the provisions of any Act of the present Session for amending the Acts relating to County Courts, so far as regards the payment of certain Expenses connected with County Courts.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow*.

MOTION.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (SEAMEN'S VOTE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Atkinson, Bill to enable Master Mariners, Marine Engineers, Seamen, and Fishermen to Vote in Parliamentary Elections in the same manner in which Members of Universities are now able to record their Votes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atkinson, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Baden-Powell, Mr. Grotian, Mr. Thomas Sutherland, Mr. Ewart, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. King, Mr. Gourley, and Mr. Cavendish Bentinck.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 190.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 8th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment * (33).

SELECT COMMITTEE—Copyhold Enfranchisement * (13), *nominated*.

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL [H L.]

Select Committee on: The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

E. Stanhope.	L. Bramwell.
E. Milltown.	L. Monkswell.
E. Kimberley.	L. Hobhouse.
E. Selborne.	L. Lingen.
L. Colchester.	L. Grimthorpe.
L. Leconfield.	L. Thring.

The Committee to meet on *Monday* next, at Three o'clock, and to appoint their own Chairman.

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 8th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*

—*Resolution* [March 7] *reported*.

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Considered as amended*

—Clyde Navigation.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [Lords.]

(*by Order*.)

CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill, as amended, be now considered."—(*Sir Charles Forster*.)

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire): I rise to move that the Bill be considered on this day six months. I am aware that it is somewhat unusual, although perfectly competent, for an hon. Member to make such a Motion; but inasmuch as I believe that several facts which I propose to mention were not brought under the notice of the Committee which inquired into the merits of the Bill, and that the Bill as it stands will only lead to confusion and not afford to the public the protection which is intended—as I believe, further, that it will improperly extend the powers of the Clyde Pilot Board—I believe that I am only doing my duty in making this Motion. No one would be more glad than myself to see that the navigation of the Clyde is properly regulated, but I do not think that this Bill will effect that object, and I will, as briefly as I can, state my reasons for taking the course I have considered it my duty to take. In the first place the Preamble of the Bill sets forth that it is—

"Expedient that the Clyde Pilot Board, constituted under the powers contained in the Act of 1858, should be authorized to make provision, as hereinafter mentioned, for the erection, maintenance and working of signalling apparatus, for regulating the pilotage and approach of steam vessels calling at or using the harbours, piers, quays and wharfs in the Firth of Clyde, and to levy dues in respect thereof."

To that I have no objection whatever, but I have an objection to the manner in which the Pilot Board proposes that this provision shall be carried out by

Clauses 10, 11, and 12. Clause 10 empowers the Pilot Board to—

“require the proprietors (whether in their own right, or as Trustees, Commissioners, or Conservators) or the lessees of any of the said harbours, piers, quays or wharfs to erect or fit up, at their own cost, on or near to such harbours, piers, quays or wharfs, such signalling apparatus as shall be mutually approved of by the Pilot Board and the said proprietors or lessees, or as, in case of difference of opinion between the parties, may be sanctioned and approved of by the Board of Trade, upon an application made to the said Board, either by the Pilot Board or by the said proprietors or lessees.”

Clause 11 empowers the Pilot Board to erect or fit up such signalling apparatus, in the event of the pier proprietors or lessees refusing or delaying to do so for a longer period than one month, after being requested by the Pilot Board so to do. To those provisions, so far as the erection and maintenance of the signalling apparatus go, the pier owners have no objection, and for the moment I will pass over the Schedule, and the exception of Greenock from it, in order to go through some other objections. By Clause 12, the signals are to be worked by some person appointed by the pier proprietors or lessees, who thus become liable not only as at present, for any accident that may arise in connection with the particular pier of which they are the proprietors or lessees, but also for the speed and the pilotage under which steam vessels using the pier are made to approach it. By Clause 13, the Pilot Board may levy in respect of steam vessels—

“carrying passengers, calling at or using any such harbour, pier, quay or wharf as aforesaid, on or near to which such signalling apparatus may be erected, any sum not exceeding One shilling per day for every such steam vessel.”

The dues are to be collected by the pier master on behalf of the Pilot Board, making the pier master, so far, a servant of the Pilot Board, although, as far as regards the signals, he is still the servant of the pier owner. Then again, by Clause 14, the dues so collected by the pier master are to be paid over by him monthly to the Pilot Board, and are to form a fund, which will be divided by the Pilot Board, or so much of it as they shall think fit, amongst the pier masters or persons working the signals in such proportions as the Board may think proper. The Clause goes on to say—

“And all payments to be made to such Pier-masters or other persons as aforesaid shall, in so

far as affecting the Pilot Board, be accepted by such persons as in full satisfaction of all remuneration due to them in respect of the duties and obligations imposed upon them under the provisions of this Act: Provided always, that any portion of such fund which shall not have been divided as aforesaid in any year shall be carried forward to the credit of such fund for the following year, and not be otherwise appropriated.”

Now, Sir, although the Pilot Board are not to appoint the pier masters, they are to pay the signalmen as much as they think fit; and I should imagine that, under such circumstances, the pier owners would have a very small chance of getting proper and efficient servants when the remuneration for duties, which I confess to be of an anxious and pressing nature, is to depend entirely on what the Pilot Board may choose to give. By Clauses 15 and 16 the Pilot Board have power to reduce the dues and compound them; and, in point of fact, they can reduce the fund to be collected by these parties to a minimum. And, then, after all this, the pier owners, who are to be responsible for the signalling, have no power of enforcing attention to the signals. Under Clause 18 the Pilot Board are empowered from time to time to make—

“bye-laws, rules, and regulations as they may think fit for regulating the working and management of the signal apparatus, and for the observance thereof by masters of steam vessels approaching, calling at, or using any harbour, pier, quay or wharf as aforesaid, and alter or repeal any such bye-laws, rules and regulations, as well as all or any of the bye-laws, rules and regulations now in force; and may also impose and recover such reasonable penalties for the breach or non-observance of such bye-laws, rules and regulations as they shall think fit, not exceeding Five pounds for each breach or non-observance thereof.”

The Pilot Board, at present, have control of the navigation of the Firth of Clyde, and they have power to make the owners and masters of steam vessels conform to their regulations. They have ample powers, at the present moment, to carry out all regulations of that nature; yet they now propose to make the pier owners, through their signals, really the controllers of the speed, pilotage, and approach to the different piers, although they give them no power whatever to enforce obedience to their signals. If a man chooses to set the signal at defiance the pier master or the pier owner has no remedy whatever against him, except through the Pilot Board; and,

moreover, when some of the pier owners were before the Private Committee the other day upstairs, and wanted to produce some new rule, which would have been of some importance to the safety of the public—namely, that the pier owners, or someone, should regulate the anchorage of ships, so that it should not interfere with the free approach to the piers, which are constantly blocked up and crowded with shipping, it was found that such provision could not be introduced into the Bill, because it was assumed to be outside the scope of the measure. If that is outside the scope of the Bill, I think it is desirable that another Bill should be introduced, in which that power should be inserted. There is no doubt whatever that the question is surrounded with great difficulties. I attended the proceedings before the Committee in this House, and I have seen the Reports which have been published of the evidence, and I find that the Committee first found that the signalling apparatus should not be worked by the servants of the pier proprietors, and that a penalty should not be recoverable from the proprietors. Later on, I find that the Committee agreed to reverse that decision, and to provide only that the owners or lessees of the pier should not be liable to penalties. Eventually they reversed that decision also; and now as the Bill stands the pier owners are liable for anything that may happen in consequence of this section. Under these circumstances, it is quite evident that for the efficient working of the signals, and for the carrying out of the bye-laws, rules and regulations, the Pilot Board have the power of making—it is quite evident that the signalmen should be the servants of the Pilot Board for the purposes of signalling. They are to be the servants of the Pilot Board as far as the collection of dues goes, and why should they not be the servants of the Pilot Board as far as the signalling goes? A provision to that effect was originally contemplated in the Bill, because, as it was deposited, the Bill contained the following provision:—

“The pier-master and such other person or persons by whomsoever appointed shall be deemed to be the officers of the Pilot Board as regards signals.”

If that were so, it would leave the liability of the pier owners exactly as it is now, and also of the owners of steam

vessels. The real truth of the matter is that no system of signalling, although it may exist at the piers, will put an end to the racing, which is what my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell), and every other witness complained of. Now that racing takes place not at the piers, but in approaching the piers, and at the present moment the Pilot Board can stop it if they choose. They have ample power to do so now. At the present moment, instead of imposing small fines on the masters and pilots of steam vessels, who are frequently part and in some instances entire owners of the vessels they command, instead of imposing small fines on them, as has been the case in the past, let the Board suspend, say for six months, or take away altogether the licences these men hold. If it were known that the master of a steam vessel on the Clyde dared not race without risking the loss of his licence, depend upon it an end would be put to racing much more quickly than by any other scheme that can be proposed. Moreover, it would place the risk and the penalty on the shoulders of the men who create the danger to the public; and that in my humble opinion is what should be done. The advantage of these signals, so far as the benefit of the public is concerned, can only extend to a distance of from 100 or 200 yards on each side of the pier. The signals cannot be seen at any greater distance, no matter what system of signalling you may adopt; and, therefore, it is only in approaching the quays that the signals would be of any service. The racing up to that point may go on harder than ever, and the pier master will have no power to interrupt it. A good deal was stated before the Committee about the present system of signalling, and I think the Committee were very much misled upon the point. There is practically no real system of signalling at all. The only places in which it is carried out is at the large piers, where several vessels can be berthed, and there, when the pier master wishes a vessel to take up a position in a particular part of the quay he signals by waving his handkerchief, or at night by waving a lamp. But he in no way interferes with a vessel up to that point, nor does he attempt to regulate the speed or the pilotage of such vessel. That is left, as it always should be, to the responsibility of the master or

pilot of the vessel, and, therefore, the pier master can be in no way said to regulate the speed or pilotage, although he does to a certain extent regulate the approach of the vessels using the pier. I will only say further one or two words with regard to the Schedule. The Schedule attached to the Bill is a very remarkable concoction. Certainly—and I say it with great humility—it has not given me a very high opinion of the care, at all events, which has been exercised by the officials of the Clyde Harbour Board, because if the rules and regulations in regard to signalling are to be for the general good of the public, which is what they purport to be intended for, how is it that only the smaller piers are dealt with, and the larger piers, to which a great number of vessels are conveying passengers and goods daily, are entirely omitted? How is it that the two piers at Greenock—the Custom House Quay and the Prince's Pier—are omitted; and why also are the Craigendoran Pier on the opposite side of the Clyde and the Rothesay Pier omitted? Those four piers have a larger traffic than any other six piers in the whole of the district of the Clyde; yet they are entirely omitted from the Bill, and instead of them a vast number of piers are put in which extend far up in the County of Argyll, where never more than one or two steamers call daily, where we have never had any complaint of jostling or racing, and where these signals will be entirely out of place. There is another point in this Schedule which is equally curious, and which does not, any more than the omissions I have pointed out, reflect credit on the authorities of the Clyde Pilot Board. I find places entered in the Schedule as piers at which no piers have ever been erected. For instance, at Ardentenny at the mouth of Loch Long; being, as it is, close to the home of the Pilot Board, I should have thought that, at all events, they knew something about that place, and that they must have known that there has never been a pier there at which a steamer could call. I should not have been so much surprised if they had made a mistake in regard to the head of Loch Fyne, but they have put a pier at Minard, where, to my certain knowledge, no pier ever existed; and they have omitted another pier—and a very good pier—at which steamers do

call. I think this Schedule shows an amount, I will not say of carelessness, but an amount of ignorance that ought to go far to condemn the Bill altogether. I do not know under what pretence the Clyde Pilot Board seek to extend their powers up to the head waters of Loch Fyne. Those waters are 70 miles away from the Clyde, and the Pilot Board at present have no power of making rules or regulations in regard to them; and as far as I know, there is no anxiety on the part of anyone that they should have such powers conferred upon them. No pilot is required to take a Clyde licence for going up Loch Fyne, and I think it is altogether wrong that by a side wind this Board should attempt to extend its powers, especially when they propose to exercise them in this very careless manner. Then again the piers of Fairlie, Wemyss Bay, and Gourcock, where there will be a large amount of traffic when it is completed, are exempted by Clause 21 from the operation of the Bill, and are put under the Board of Trade for the erection of signalling apparatus. Now, why should these piers be put on a different footing from other piers? Why should the penalty in Clause 21 for the non-erection of signalling apparatus be only £5, whereas the penalty imposed in connection with smaller piers by Clause 12 is £10? Why should there be these differences? They may seem trivial, but they add to the general confusion of the whole subject, and I really think that if the entire circumstances had been fairly brought before the Committee, their decision would have been that the Bill, as regards signalling and the powers conferred upon the Clyde Pilot Board, had better be reconsidered with a view of making the measure more practicable and workable, and of confining the Board to their proper and legitimate jurisdiction. If the first part of the Bill is necessary as regards the Clyde Trustees, I should be the last to oppose the passing of the measure; and if the promoters choose to have the Bill re-committed with a view of dropping all the later parts of the measure in order to bring them up in a better and more matured form next year, I, for one, should not oppose that course. I thought at one time it would be sufficient merely to include the piers which have been left out; but of course I see that that could not be done because there would be no op-

portunity of enabling the owners of such piers to appear before the Committee if they should object to the Bill. Therefore I think it would be better, unless, as I say, it is absolutely necessary that the first part of the Bill should be passed for the benefit of the Clyde navigation—it would be better to drop the latter part altogether, and have it brought up again in a more thoroughly prepared and well-considered form. There is one thing I ought to point out—namely, that the Clyde Trustees, who are parties to the Bill, have carefully omitted to put in any of the piers above Greenock, although they are all in the narrow part of the river where the danger is the greatest. It will be seen that all piers, from Greenock to Glasgow, including Glasgow itself, are carefully omitted. I do think that if this signalling system is to be required at all it should be universal, and certainly that it should be made applicable to those piers which are chiefly used by the public. I must apologize to the House for the time I have taken up in making these remarks; but I feel very strongly on the subject, and therefore I have ventured to express myself at length. I beg to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be considered on this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word “now,” in order to add the words “this day six months,”—(*Colonel Malcolm*,)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, “That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question.”

MR. CALDWELL (*Glasgow, St. Rollox*): I think the course which has been taken by the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire (*Colonel Malcolm*) is a most extraordinary one. We have here a Bill promoted by a public authority in Scotland, elected by the ratepayers, and acting entirely in the interests of the safety of the public. They have come to Parliament with a Bill containing a variety of provisions for the purpose of improving the navigation of the Clyde and securing the protection of the public. That Bill has passed through a Committee of the House of Lords, and also through a Committee of the House of Commons, and now an attempt is made at the last moment to throw it out; the only reason assigned being that the Bill has not been properly considered, and the objections to it were

not properly laid before the Committee. Now I should like to ask whose fault it was if the case for the promoters was not properly stated before the Committee? The pier owners were represented by counsel who fought the measure inch by inch. The hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire has stated that he was in attendance on the Committee himself, and if any point was neglected which ought to have been brought forward he was on the spot for the purpose of assisting counsel, and giving them advice. Therefore, for the hon. and gallant Member to come down to the House, now and complain of the provisions of the Bill, and suggest that another opportunity ought to be afforded for restating the case of the opponents is, I think, one of the most extraordinary propositions which has ever been submitted in this or any other Legislative Assembly. I do not propose to follow the hon. and gallant Member into all the merits of this question. I will simply take up the case on this footing—that the Bill is promoted by the Clyde Trustees, who are an official public body appointed to look after the interests of the navigation and the public safety. I may, however, point out to the House that the Bill deals with many questions besides those which have been referred to by the hon. and gallant Member. It extends the period for the compulsory purchase of lands; it extends the period for the completion of railways; it makes regulations for the collection of rates and the licensing of weighers and others; it gives power to levy dues, and it provides for the administration of such dues. It also gives power to make bye-laws; and, yet, if the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member be accepted, a Bill containing all these valuable provisions is to be thrown to the winds, simply because upon one comparatively minor point the hon. and gallant Member regards it as defective, and based upon conclusions to which the hon. and gallant Member objects. The hon. and gallant Member seems to think that some of these questions were not sufficiently argued before the Committee, especially those which relate to the signal apparatus in regard to steam vessels approaching the piers from different directions. There can be no doubt that great danger is entailed in that way, and the hon. and gallant Member himself admits that

there is an absolute necessity for regulating the matter. All that this Bill proposes is that the pier owners, who are the persons in receipt of the emoluments of the pier, should regulate the approach to the pier and the speed at which vessels should run. Now, I venture to say that the approach of steam vessels to a pier can only be properly regulated by signals from the shore. The pier owners are the parties who appoint the pier master, and the pier master is the man who is to work the signals. As regards the means by which these provisions shall be carried out, it is provided that the Clyde Trustees shall have the power to levy certain dues which are to be handed over to the pier master as his remuneration for working the signals; but it is also provided that the Clyde Trustees shall simply act as the agents of the pier master in collecting the money, which money is simply handed over and divided among the men appointed by the proprietors of the different piers. Then what is the object of the opposition to the Bill? Is it desired that the responsibility of the men who are appointed by the pier owners should be reduced to nothing? The pier owners receive the dues of the pier. They are not only the owners of the pier, but the owners of the land round about the pier, and, in consequence of the existence of the pier, the value of that land is considerably increased. They now desire to be relieved of the responsibility of working a signalling apparatus which Parliament considers to be necessary in the interest of the public. The Clyde Trustees are not seeking in this case to alter the existing law of Scotland in any one particular. They are simply endeavouring to secure the appointment of signalmen by the pier owners, and they leave the responsibility to be determined according to the ordinary principles of Scottish law. Objection has been raised to the Schedule attached to the Bill that certain piers, such as Craigendoran and others, are not included in the Schedule. The reason is obvious. Those piers are at present maintained under special Acts of Parliament, and the persons in charge of them have the power of making bye-laws for the management of those piers. This Bill simply provides that other piers, which are the property of private individuals, and in regard to which no Act of Parliament exists, shall also have

the power of making bye-laws. It has been stated by the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire that a certain clause which was contained in the Bill, as it was originally projected, has since been omitted. Now, no such clause as that which the hon. and gallant Member has referred to was originally in the Bill. I have noticed that the same point was raised by the learned counsel who appeared in opposition to the Bill before the Committee; but the learned counsel stated that he had no means of proving that such a clause was originally included in the measure. The hon. and gallant Member says that the Clyde Trustees might withdraw the latter part of the Bill, and have the Bill re-committed. But I would point out to the House the extreme inconvenience of raising questions of this kind where the parties promoting the Bill are not at this moment represented. All the parties interested in the measure were represented before the Committees of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. They were fully heard there, and to renew the discussion here when the parties are not able to be represented by counsel would certainly be to take the promoters at a disadvantage. If you are now to reopen the merits of the question, as the hon. and gallant Member proposes, you might just as well go every year into the merits of every Private Bill which has been passed through a Committee of this House. On these grounds, I maintain that the Amendment ought to be rejected, and particularly so because the Bill has already been carefully inquired into by Select Committees of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, before whom the parties were heard by counsel. They had then every opportunity of fully stating their case, and if they neglected to state it properly, the entire fault must rest with themselves.

MR. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow): Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word on this subject, and to state the line which actuated the Committee on arriving at their decision, as I happened to have been a Member of the Committee. I propose to be very brief in doing so, because as the Bill is one which is of very great importance to the part of Scotland to which it refers, I have no doubt that some of the Scotch Members will be able more specifically to lay their views on the

matter before the House. So far as the facts of the case are concerned, I think they have been tolerably well stated by the hon. Member for St. Rollox (Mr. Caldwell), who has just sat down. I was astonished to hear the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire (Colonel Malcolm) state that if the opposition to the Bill had been better brought forward before the Committee, he had very little doubt that a different conclusion would have been arrived at. Now, I may say that that is casting a very unjust imputation on the learned and able counsel who represented the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and other persons who are pier owners. There could not possibly have been a case more ably and clearly stated than the case of the Petitioners against the Bill was stated by the learned counsel who represented them. Every fact that could be adduced on their behalf was brought forward, and I think that the objections of the hon. and gallant Gentleman have narrowed themselves down to two. He has expressed surprise that certain important piers in the Clyde have not been brought within the operation of the Bill. Now, I should like to point out to the hon. and gallant Gentleman that that was never stated in the Petition of the opponents, and not having been stated in their Petition it is only fair to assume that it was not considered a grievance that these very important piers were not included. His only other objection that is worth dealing with is that under the Bill, as it has now passed Committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons, responsibilities are imposed on himself and other pier owners to which they are not now liable, so far as rendering them liable for any damage that may occur by reason of any fault on the part of the signalmen. That is the ground upon which the hon. and gallant Member asks for the re-committal of the Bill, with the object of having the pier owners relieved from any responsibility of that kind. Now, I must altogether deny, and I do so quite respectfully, the statement of the hon. and gallant Gentleman in that respect. What is the present system of signalling? It consists altogether of the employment on the pier of men for the purpose of signalling with a handkerchief or a lamp. The signalman stands on the pier, and as the boats approach he displays the signals, if there

happen to be two steamboats approaching. It was never denied, from the beginning to the end of the evidence adduced before the Committee, or in the contention of the learned counsel employed on behalf of the pier owners, that that was not a most defective system of signalling; and yet, if any accident should happen to occur to life or property through this defective signalling, the owners of the pier are exempt from damages. As far as my recollection serves me, I think—and I think that the other Members of the Committee will bear me out—the liability, as far as the pier owners are concerned, was fully admitted throughout the inquiry. The bodies who have been specially charged with the navigation of the Clyde are the promoters of the Bill—namely, the Clyde Navigation Trustees; and their contention is that the present system of signalling is so exceedingly defective, that there ought to be substituted for hand signalling the use of a semaphore, by which vessels at a greater distance would be warned of any danger that might occur. The Committee came to the conclusion that semaphore signalling, in contradistinction from hand signalling, would afford more protection to the public; and that, so far from increasing the risk of the pier owners, it would diminish that risk considerably, as signals could be put out so as to reach vessels in the waterway in a much better form than at present. I happened to be Chairman of the Committee which considered the Bill in this House, and I maintain that the measure, as it passed both the Committee of the House of Lords and the Committee of the House of Commons, not only left the pier owner in the position he now occupies in regard to liability in the event of any accident, but that the establishment of a system of semaphore signalling would decrease the possibility of accident very considerably by enabling the signalman to apprise vessels in the waterway of possible danger at a much greater distance than at present. The hon. and gallant Gentleman says that the responsibility ought not to be placed on private owners; but he must be well aware that it would be utterly useless to put it on the Pilot Board, because the Pilot Board have no funds whatever from which the damage could be paid, whereas the pier owners are in the position of receiving all the

profits which arise from the calling of vessels at the different piers, and they have the power of appointing fit and proper persons to make the signals. If, owing to any fault or incapacity on the part of the signalman, an accident should occur, the person who should be responsible for any damage done ought naturally to be the person who derives the profits. In what other way, I would like to ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and those who agree with him—in what other way does he propose, if an accident to life or property occurs, that compensation is to be paid, if it is not to come from the source which derives the whole of the profits? What I contend is, that it is only the same liability which now exists at present which is imposed on the pier owners, and that they will have the advantage of diminishing the chances of accident. As far as my recollection serves me, I do not think there was anything further of importance in the objections of the hon. and gallant Gentleman to which I need advert. I will only say that the decision of the Committee upstairs was altogether confirmatory of the view taken by the Committee of the House of Lords. I may add that out of 38 pier owners, the Petition against the Bill was only rejected by eight, so that I take it that the remaining 30 who make no objection have acquiesced in the necessity for the Bill. The Duke of Argyll did not sign the Petition against the Bill which was presented to the House of Commons, although I believe that he did subscribe to some of the allegations contained in it. At any rate, there was no Petition from his Grace sent down to the House of Commons. I may say that I have not the smallest feeling in the world as to whether the Bill is accepted or rejected by the House, but I believe there never was an occasion when the provisions of a Bill were more strongly fought out, and in which the decision of a Committee of the House of Lords was more completely confirmed by that of a Committee of the House of Commons. After hearing arguments on both sides, supported by the powerful advocacy of learned counsel, I think it would be highly regrettable if the House were now, at the last moment, to accept the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and throw out the Bill.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): Having sat upon the Committee, if I am not out of Order, I should like to inform the House, in answer to an inquiry I heard made on the opposite Benches, that the Committee were by no means unanimous in passing the Bill. There were two Members, of whom I was one, who strongly objected to the injustice inflicted by the Bill in endeavouring to impose an entirely new liability, and one that was never before imposed on the owners of piers in the Clyde—in fact, a sea risk in place of a landing stage, or pier risk. We considered that they ought not to be held more liable for any mistakes on the part of signalmen than they are at present, and that, under the circumstances, the provisions of the Bill were unfair, and we tried our best to get these provisions altered; but I and an hon. Colleague who acted with me were in a minority (owing to the Chairman's casting vote), and we failed to get the clause passed which we submitted, and which we thought would be sufficient for the protection of the public. The clause we desired to add was that the pier owners should not be responsible for any error on the part of their signalmen, provided that the signalman held a certificate of competency sanctioned by the Board of Trade. We considered that they would then have done their duty towards the public in seeing that competent men were appointed to that important position, and having done so, we were of opinion that they ought to be relieved of any further liability which might arise from the racing of the steam-boats. It seems to me that instead of decreasing collisions, the Bill as it stands, will have the effect of increasing them, by removing the liability from the steam-boat which causes a collision, to the pier owner who has nothing to do with it. I think all that it was necessary to provide was that the signalman should be a competent officer approved of by the Board of Trade, such signalman being liable under the Bill to a penalty for misconduct or negligence, and also to the forfeiture of his certificate in the same way as a pilot would be. Therefore I hope the House will, in this instance, see fit to depart from its ordinary rules, and as has been suggested by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Argyllshire, will throw out this Bill in order that it may be

brought in again in some form next year, by which so much injustice will not be inflicted as is likely to be perpetrated by the present clauses of the Bill.

SIR ARCHIBALD ORR-EWING (Dumbarton): Although a large number of piers in Dumbartonshire are brought under this Bill, I may say that I have not received a letter of objection from any single individual in the county I represent; and therefore I think the persons who are most interested are convinced of the necessity of having these signals placed upon the piers. Of late years we have had a great number of rapid sailing vessels frequenting the Clyde. All of them are anxious to get first to the pier, and frequent accidents have happened in consequence. Nobody is liable for them, and I think it is a most essential provision in the Bill to place these piers in a position which may render accidents in the future less frequent. Considering the stage to which the Bill has arrived, I trust that my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Argyllshire will not persevere in his opposition. I know that the Bill is regarded as being of considerable importance by the City of Glasgow.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (MR. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I have listened with attention to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire (Colonel Malcolm), and also to that of the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. H. S. Wright), who spoke of the view entertained by a minority of the Committee to which the Bill was referred. I think the House would be very ill advised in not supporting the Bill which has now passed not only through a Committee of this House, but also through a Committee of the House of Lords, even if there might be some technical errors which ought to have required the consideration of the Committee upstairs. I find, however, from the speech of the hon. Member for Nottingham, that the substantial question was fully argued and considered; that substantial question being whether the pier owners of the Clyde are in future to be put under an obligation to provide some system of signalling, which would be practically under the sanction of the Board of Trade; because I find that the Board of Trade are the referees in the event of the Clyde Pilot Board and the Clyde

pier owners not being able to agree. The simple question is this—when a pier master, appointed by the pier owner, makes a mistake or is guilty of carelessness or negligence in the system of signalling he has to conduct, who is to assume the responsibility of the error? The ordinary principle of law is that the person who appoints a servant is liable for any accident occasioned through the fault or negligence of such servant. That is the principle contained in the Bill. The hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire and the hon. Member for Nottingham want to oust that general principle of law and to throw the responsibility on the signalman himself. Now, on general principle, I believe it is dangerous to interfere with settled principles of law, and as a master is made liable for the acts of his servants, I think the Committees of the House of Lords and Commons have rightly decided in including a provision to that effect in the present Bill.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I also was a Member of the Committee, and I will only detain the House for a few moments while I call attention to one or two matters which have been mentioned in the course of the discussion. The hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire prefaced his remarks with an apology for not observing the general rule in regard to questions of this kind. Now, although my Parliamentary experience is not so varied or so extensive as his,—and therefore I cannot assume to be a judge—I think it is somewhat unusual to oppose a Private Bill in this stage. The hon. and gallant Gentleman states that he is in a position to lay before the House some facts that were not laid before the Committee. It has, however, been stated already, that it was quite open for the hon. and gallant Gentleman to have laid those facts before the Committee at the time, and I think it would have been far more conducive to the convenience of the House if he had done so. I do not know whether it is in accordance with the etiquette of this House that the decision of a Committee should be discussed in this House in the manner it has been this evening, and I have no wish to follow the example which has been set in the matter. The circumstances out of which the necessity for the Bill has arisen is the fact that a great majority of the

inhabitants of Glasgow resort during the summer months to watering places along the Firth of Clyde. Hundreds and thousands of people pass down the Clyde late in the evening returning to business at Glasgow in the morning, and the danger which has arisen from racing to the different piers has rendered it necessary that some regulation should be made in order to secure the safety of the passengers going up and down the river. The necessity for the Bill arises from the fact that several persons have complained and written letters to the newspapers pointing out the danger of collision through the captains of the steamers racing for priority at the landing stages. As no action was taken by the Clyde Pilot Board, the parties who felt aggrieved applied to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade have brought pressure to bear upon the Pilot Board, which has resulted in the promotion of the present Bill. As to the objections which have been raised by the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire, I only wish to say that it is an attempt on the part of the pier owners to get both a direct and an indirect advantage from it. They get a direct advantage from the dues derived from the piers they have erected, and an indirect advantage from the increased value of the land in the neighbourhood of the piers; yet they are now attempting to evade the duties and responsibilities which are imposed on all who employ servants. It is necessary to lay the liability somewhere, and, under the circumstances, I think there cannot be two opinions that it ought to be laid upon those who employ the pier masters and receive the profits derived from the use of the piers. The Pilot Board have no income whatever, and it would be absurd to place the responsibility upon them. I hope that the House will not accept the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire, or countenance this dog-in-the-manger policy of the pier owners to derive large revenues from the piers and throw all the responsibility upon the Clyde Pilot Board.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) rose, amid cries of "Agreed." The hon. Member said: I shall be glad to sit down if the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire will withdraw his Motion; but if the matter is to go to a Vote, I trust

that we shall arrive at an intelligent Vote in regard to the points which have been raised. The Bill is promoted for the purpose of giving additional powers to the Clyde Trustees, who have spent millions of money in making the Clyde what it now is—a large artificial canal for the navigation of the biggest ships. They have also conferred large powers on the Pilot Board. I was astonished at the theory advanced by the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. H. S. Wright), that power ought not to be placed in the hands of the Clyde Pilot Board to compel the owners of piers to pay a maximum toll to the Pilot Board of 1s. per day, when we read of some of the dividends paid by the pier owners for the privileges they possess. I will take a case where the owner is also the lessee. It is a case with which I am very well acquainted, and the pier is one which I visit at least a dozen times a year. I refer to the pier at Dunoon, which is put down on the valuation roll of the County of Argyll at £1,293. These piers are very lucrative; and to complain because 1s. a day is to be levied for the putting up of a semaphore signal seems to me most absurd. There was one point raised by the hon. and gallant Member for Argyllshire which has my entire sympathy—namely, the fact that the whole of the piers on the Clyde have not been scheduled. In my humble opinion, they ought all of them to have been scheduled; but when I look at the provisions of the Bill, I find that, under them, the Pilot Board have the right to take in, not only the piers scheduled, but all the other piers on the Clyde; so that all the hon. and gallant Gentleman asks for is included in the Bill. [Colonel MALCOLM dissented.] I see that the hon. and gallant Member shakes his head; but the clause excepts Greenock only, and there is power, by a special Act, to compel the same thing in regard to that port. I think the House has a right to complain that what ought to have been a second reading discussion—seeing that the objections which have been raised are not to the details, but to the principle of the Bill—has been deferred until this stage of the measure, and that it should now be attempted, on inaccurate information, to throw out the measure, especially after all the heavy charges which have been incurred by the Clyde Trustees and the Pilot

Board in promoting the Bill. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] I have no desire to take up more of the time of the House than is necessary, because I know that the prolongation of the debate may have the effect of blocking the Crofters' Bill, which is of much more importance to Scotland than this measure; but, on behalf of the important interests concerned, I feel compelled to say that it is quite as necessary this signalling power should be given to the pier-masters as that you should provide signalling power at the railway stations. We have a number of Companies and steamers competing with each other, all trying to get first to the pier; and the pier-masters ought to have some measure to indicate which is to reach the pier first, and be berthed. Of course this is of importance to the vessels themselves, because the first in usually gets the passengers; but hence arises the necessity of taking precautions to prevent the destruction of life and property.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 200; Noes 100; Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 46.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill to be read the third time.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

TRADE AND COMMERCE—OFFICIAL RETURNS OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, If the attention of the President has been called to the recent Resolution of the Associated Chamber of Commerce as to the serious errors which occur in the official Returns of the description, place of origin, and destination of goods imported into and exported from the United Kingdom; and, if it is possible for directions to be given that Returns shall in future be made out more fully and accurately, and especially as regards the nature, place of origin, and destination within the United Kingdom of all articles imported from foreign countries in a manufactured or partly manufactured state?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth):

Dr. Clark

The Board of Trade have received a copy of the Resolution of the Associated Chambers of Commerce referred to by the hon. Member; but they have received no representations as to the existence of the alleged errors in the Returns. I may say, however, that the Board will be glad of any suggestions for the improvement of the Returns which the Committee, mentioned in the Resolution, may make; and would then submit them for consideration to the Committee of the Representatives of the Board of Trade and Customs, which annually revises the classifications in the Returns.

GENERAL ELECTION, 1886—CHARGES OF RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND).

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Why Section 11 of the—

"Return of Charges made to Candidates at the late General Election in Great Britain and Ireland by Returning Officers"

has not been filled up in that portion of the Return regarding Scotland; and, if an amended Return will be published, giving the required information for Scotland?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said, there were only three cases in Scotland arising out of the General Election of 1886 in which the Returning Officers' expenses were taxed—namely, Edinburgh, South Division, where the amount charged was reduced by nearly £4; Linlithgowshire by about £24; and Caithness-shire by £83 4s. 1d. No doubt, the Return ought to have shown in column 10 the amount charged, and in column 11 the amount ultimately paid. He understood column 10 of last year's Return showed the amount ultimately paid. It seemed that the practice followed in making that Return had been continued in respect of this Return, notwithstanding that the passing of the Returning Officers' (Scotland) Act, 1886, had intervened. In the case of a Return of this magnitude, he could not promise a re-issue; but he could have the corrected pages circulated, if the hon. Member pressed for it. He hoped he would not think it worth the expense. He had taken measures to ensure that the Returns should be properly filled up in future.

VACCINATION ACTS—CASE OF JAMES BAMFORD.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether James Bamford was sentenced by the magistrates of Newport Pagnell, on or about 10 February, to 28 days' imprisonment in Northampton Gaol for refusal to have his two children vaccinated; whether two of the magistrates on the bench were clergymen; whether James Bamford was arrested at his work in Kettering, and handcuffed; whether the practice of handcuffing in such cases has been condemned by successive Home Secretaries; whether Bamford is subjected in gaol to precisely the same treatment as if he had been condemned for theft or assault; and, whether he will consider the practicability of making some discrimination in prison treatment between ordinary criminals and conscientious recalcitrants against the Vaccination Laws?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): James Bamford was on the 2nd of February sentenced to pay a fine for not complying with an order of the Justices to have his two children vaccinated. In default of payment he was committed to prison for two consecutive periods of 14 days. Two of the magistrates were clergymen. Bamford was arrested in the street at Kettering. He voluntarily accompanied the police officer to the station, and was not handcuffed. He was there met by an officer of the Bucks Constabulary, who thought it necessary to put a handcuff on his left hand, as the prisoner was a young and active man, and had left Buckinghamshire to evade service of the summons. It has been the opinion of the Home Office for some time that handcuffing should not be used unless there is fair ground for supposing that either violence may be used or an escape attempted. Bamford's treatment in this case has not been the same as it might have been if he had been convicted of theft or assault. He has not been "tasked" or put to hard labour of any kind. It is true that this is the second proceeding against Bamford for non-compliance with the Vaccination Acts. I do not see my way to modify the prison treatment of a person who has disobeyed the law on the ground that such disobedience proceeded from con-

scientious motives, the *bona fides* of which it would be difficult to ascertain.

ADULTERATION ACTS — LICENSED VICTUALLERS—WESTMINSTER.

MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to recent prosecutions of Licensed Victuallers in Westminster for breaches of the Adulteration Acts; whether such prosecutions resulted in conviction; and, whether the record of such convictions was laid before the Justices at the Licensing Sessions held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on the 1st March; and, if not, whether he will give instructions that full information as to licensed premises shall be sent from the various Police Courts of the Metropolis to the Justices acting at such Licensing Sessions?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): It is the fact that there have recently been prosecutions of Licensed Victuallers at Westminster and other Courts, and many of such prosecutions have resulted in convictions. A list of convictions is not submitted to the Licensing Justices by the officials of the Court; but it is usual for the solicitor to the Board of Inland Revenue to furnish an account of such proceedings to the Licensing Justices' clerk, who, moreover, if authorized by a Justice, has power to inspect, without fee or reward, the Register of Convictions, which is kept at every Court. Full information as to such convictions is also given by the police to the Licensing Justices. Under these circumstances, I do not think it necessary for me to issue instructions such as my hon. Friend suggests, which would entail much additional labour on the clerks to the police-courts.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN ENGLAND — SCOTCH CASES — "JONES v. SCOTTISH ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY."

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether his attention has been called to the case of "Jones v. The Scottish Accident Insurance Company Limited," reported in volume 17 of the *Law Reports*, Queen's

Bench Division, page 421, where Mr. Justice Day decided that the plaintiff was unable to take proceedings in the High Court of Justice in England, because the Company had its domicile or head office in Edinburgh, out of the jurisdiction of the High Court, and which judgment was confirmed on appeal; and whether he will propose legislation on the subject?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I am acquainted with the decision referred to in the Question of the hon. Baronet. The rights of persons and Companies domiciled in Scotland and Ireland to be exempt from the liability to be sued in the High Court in England was made the subject of special provision at the time of the passing of the Judicature Acts. I find that all the Scotch Insurance Companies, including the Company in question, issuing policies in England, are now willing to be, and are, in fact, sued in England; and I think there is no necessity for further legislation.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—SALARIES OF OFFICIALS.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the proposed increase to the salaries of the Irish prison officials, What grades are to be excluded, and for what reason; and, whether the increase will be in proportion to their former pay, or on what basis is it to be calculated?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: I am informed that the proposed scheme of increase of salary of the Irish prison officials does not include deputy governors, chief warders, clerks, female officers, or officers in the Convict Department, these cases not having been included in the recommendation of the Royal Commission. The Chief Secretary has already stated that the increase is not a proportional one; but it would be impossible to give the details within the limits of an answer to a Question.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE BILL.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the Chairman of

Sir Robert Fowler

the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether, in the event of the clauses he promises to propose and support, by which a proportionate share of the Wine and Coal Duties are to be secured to the outer Metropolitan area, not being adopted by the Committee on the Bill, he will vote against and oppose its third reading?

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir JAMES M'GAREL HOGG) (Middlesex, Hornsey): Mr. Speaker: I am surprised that my hon. Friend should have felt it necessary to ask this Question, after the pledge given in my reply to the hon. Member for North Paddington (Mr. Lionel Cohen) on Thursday last. I need hardly say that it is my intention fully to carry out this pledge. I do not anticipate the contingency to which my hon. Friend refers; but if the clauses in question are not adopted by the Committee on the Bill, it would be my duty to bow to the Committee's decision.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND: After the answer I have received from the hon. and gallant Baronet, I beg to give Notice that when the Bill is brought forward I shall move that it be read this day six months.

MERCHANT SHIPPING — STEAM TUG OFF MUMBLES HEAD.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stratford) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If his attention was not called, in January last, by Mr. A. J. Lambert, to the suggestion that a steam tug should be stationed at the Mumbles Head for the purpose of saving life and property during bad weather; and, whether, considering the offer to supply coal for such a steamer gratis, he will order the experiment to be made?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Although the Admiralty would be at all times desirous of sending any vessel that was available to the assistance of a ship in distress, the suggestion offered by Mr. Lambert is one that is outside their province, and is a matter rather for the consideration of the Board of Trade than the Admiralty. I understand that, with the view of facilitating Government co-operation, certain gentlemen have undertaken to provide gratuitously the coal necessary for such a vessel; and I assume that they would be ready

to give that help to any public or local body that can provide the tug required.

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACTS — LABOURERS' COTTAGES, CO. LIMERICK.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the Official Arbitrator will visit Newcastle next, County Limerick, to receive evidence respecting the value of the plots selected as sites for labourers' cottages in that Union, in order that the labourers may derive some advantage from the cultivation of the plots this year?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said, the Arbitrator has been appointed and will visit Newcastle when the Clerk of the Union had published the necessary advertisements, and taken the other preliminary steps.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — ABDUCTION OF ETHEL ROE.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, If his attention has been called to the abduction of Ethel Roe, a Protestant girl of 13, and a ward in Chancery, from her grandmother's house in Pembroke Road, Dublin, on the 19th February; and, what steps it is proposed to take to bring her again under the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery?

MR. H. J. GILL (Limerick): Before the right hon. and learned Gentleman answers that Question, I would wish to ask him this supplementary one —if he is aware that Ethel Roe was with her mother in Belgium, and brought up as a Roman Catholic until she was about nine years of age; if he is aware that she was allowed by her mother to go under the care of her grandmother in Dublin, on the understanding that her religion should not be tampered with; if he is aware that she is now with her mother again of her own free will, having written a letter to that effect, in which she stated that she was being brought up by her grandmother to execrate the religion in which she believed; and if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will state which he considers the more natural guardian of a child — a mother or a grandmother?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin Uni-

versity): I am not aware of any of the matters to which the hon. Member has referred. In reference to the Question of my hon. Friend, I have seen in the newspapers the statement as to the disappearance of Ethel Roe, a ward of the English Court of Chancery, from her grandmother's house, last month; and I am aware that the matter has been brought by the grandmother to the notice of the police, who are prosecuting inquiries on the subject.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman if his attention has been called to a letter which appeared in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 1st of March last, written from Metz, Germany; and, whether he has any reason to doubt the authenticity of that letter?

MR. JOHNSTON: I would like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman if he is not aware that this girl has been attending church and Sunday-school in Dublin; and, if it has not been generally believed in Dublin that the letter referred to is a forgery?

MR. HOLMES: I am not aware of the matters to which my hon. Friend refers. I have read the letter in *The Freeman's Journal*; but, beyond the circumstance that the style is singularly matured for the composition of a girl of 13, I have no information as to its authenticity.

MR. H. J. GILL: I beg to inform the right hon. and learned Gentleman—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will give the names of the members of the Departmental Committee who inquired into the grievances of the Civil Service writers; whether any representative of the writers was nominated to serve on the Committee; what offices were visited; whether the Report of the Committee was based chiefly on the evidence supplied by permanent officials who are in receipt of large salaries; and, whether he will state the specific points into which the Committee was ordered to inquire, and what were the points of the queries addressed by the Committee to the chief officials of the different Departments?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) in reply, said, his best answer was that he would lay the Report of the Committee before the House.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in view of the acknowledgment in the Treasury Minute on "Civil Service Writers" just presented to Parliament, that one-third of the number of "writers" employed are engaged on work of a "higher order" than that for which they were intended, he would have instructions given to the Civil Service Commissioners to suspend any contemplated examinations for Lower Division clerkships until the legitimate claims of deserving "writers" are met by promotion to the permanent establishment?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) in reply, said, that the Treasury Minute recommended that in special cases writers of admitted merit might be promoted to clerkships in the Lower Division, and that recommendation would be carried out. He was not prepared to say that all examinations for Lower Division clerkships should be suspended in the meantime. The writers were at present free to compete for clerkships in the Lower Division; and, moreover, they were allowed to compete up to an age five years in advance of the ordinary limit. In this way they had already an avenue to the Lower Division. While he was anxious to satisfy the fair claims of the writers to promotion, the educational standard of the Lower Division must be kept up. It had been the policy of the House to see that the efficiency of the Civil Service should be maintained by adhering to certain educational standards, which it would not be well to break down by the unrestricted admission of writers.

BANKRUPTCY COURT (IRELAND)—UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the Irish Bankruptcy Court and the Lords of the Treasury refuse public access to the List of Unclaimed Dividends; whether the Irish Bankruptcy Judges have given any instructions to the officials of their Court as to the proper and periodic examination of the List; and, if not, whether such instruc-

tions will now be given; whether the total amount of unclaimed dividends reaches the sum of £40,000; and, what means, if any, are taken for the due payment of this derelict fund?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University), in reply, said, the unclaimed dividends in a particular estate can be ascertained, but that a general examination of these Lists was not allowed by the Irish Bankruptcy Court, or by the Lords of the Treasury. There was a yearly examination; but he was not aware that any specific instructions had been given by the Judges. The total amount was about £44,000, of which about £34,000 had been transferred to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—THE TRAWLING AT BALLANTRAE, AYRSHIRE.

MR. VERNON (Ayrshire, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the hardships inflicted upon the local fishermen of Ballantrae, Ayrshire, whose industry is stated to have almost collapsed owing to the operations of heavy English trawling vessels, which, with their beam trawls, destroy the fishing gear of the set net and long line fishermen, besides tearing up the spawning beds; and, whether the Board of Trade will cause inquiry to be made into these allegations, and also into the feasibility of having a line of demarcation drawn within which it shall not be lawful for trawlers to enter the Firth of Clyde?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): My attention has been called to this matter. As regards any past offences by destroying nets and lines, no remedy is possible unless the port initial and registry numbers of the offending vessels have been ascertained, or they can be otherwise identified. If injury has been done to spawning beds, the Fishery Board of Scotland has power to restrict or prohibit the mode of fishing which causes the injury, and application should be made to that Board. The Fishery Board, in addition to this power, is authorized to forbid fishing by any particular mode in any part of the territorial waters for the purpose of fish culture, or experiments in fish culture. I

shall communicate with the Fishery Board on the matter, for the purpose of ascertaining whether more effectual steps can be taken to protect the local fishing industry.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1862)
AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, If he will have any objection to introduce into the Bill to consolidate the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill with the Act of 1862 words more fully and specifically to describe the false marking of lengths, widths, and weights of piece goods and yarns than are to be found in the Act of 1862?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I believe that Clause 7 of this Bill and the Act of 1862, read together, as they will be in the Consolidating Bill, do sufficiently define "the false marking of length, width, and weights of piece goods and yarns;" but if that is shown not to be the case, I shall be happy to see whether the hon. Member's wish can be met in Committee, and, of course, to do so if possible.

THE CURRENCY—HALF-SOVEREIGNS.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in view of the fact that, at the present moment, the supply of half-sovereigns in circulation is very largely in excess of the demand, as is evidenced by the unprecedentedly large amounts of these coins held by the private and joint stock banks, he will give instructions to suspend their further issue by the Mint for the present?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, that the Queen had power to determine, by Proclamation, the denomination of coins to be coined at the Mint. Apart from that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no power to suspend the issue of half-sovereigns. So far, however, as the Mint was concerned, there was no fear of its issuing half-sovereigns in excess of the demand, because it only issued them when the Bank of England required a supply, and the Mint had no power to refuse such a demand. There had been no demand for half-sovereigns

last year, and, consequently, none had been issued. He was aware that the half-sovereign was a most expensive coin; and it was, therefore, most undesirable that more should be coined than were absolutely required.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS—COMPULSORY RETIREMENTS.

MR. MENZIES (Perthshire, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is within the power of the Royal Commission at present inquiring into the establishment of the different Offices of State to recommend, for the purpose of accelerating promotion, the compulsory retirement of all Civil servants after a fixed period of service; and, whether it is the fact that, in the Admiralty Civil servants have, on completing 40 years' service, been called on to resign?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir. There is no restriction on the power of the Royal Commission to make any recommendation that they may think proper with a view of increasing the efficiency of the Public Service. I am informed that there is a rule at the Admiralty that the Civil servants shall retire at 60, if they have completed 40 years' service, and it is found to work very satisfactorily.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—CONTRACT FOR CARTRIDGES FOR QUEENSLAND.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether the 250,000 cartridges which Messieurs Latimer Clark, Muirhead, and Company contracted to deliver, in equal instalments, on the 25th February and the 4th March, were so delivered on such days, or on what subsequent days; whether they were all, or what portion of them, manufactured at the Millwall Works of Messieurs Latimer Clark, Muirhead and Company, or were supplied to them from elsewhere; and, if so, by whom were they made; and, whether, at the time of the making the contract, the Director of Contracts was aware that the firm to whom he gave the contract were not manufacturers of cartridges, and had not the machinery for such manufacture?

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked, Whether the hon. Gentleman would, at the same time, say whether he was aware that it was the case that Messrs. Kynoch of Birmingham had executed contracts wholly or in part for the British Government; whether the work had been completed in the time specified in the contract; and what proportion, if any, had been rejected for bad work?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (MR. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): With regard to the Question which has just been put to me, I must ask the hon. Member for Shoreditch to put it down on the Paper. A delay, which the Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory states to have been altogether unavoidable, has occurred in supplying the contractors with the necessary gauges from Woolwich. The result is that no deliveries have yet been made. Notwithstanding this, I am assured that the first delivery will be made this week, and that the whole quantity will be completed by the time originally fixed. The premises have been inspected by an official of the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich. The Superintendent reports that the cartridges are being actually produced at Millwall. They will be filled by Dyer and Robson, of Greenwich. I have already explained to my hon. Friend that this firm has not before manufactured cartridges for the War Department, and that this order is a trial one. I shall be happy, if he wishes it, to show him the Papers on the subject, which will, I think, satisfy him that the War Office had received full assurance that the firm were in a position to take the order.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): Were the caps also manufactured by this firm?

MR. NORTHCOTE: I will ascertain for my hon. Friend.

ARMY (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT)—STEEL FOR PROJECTILES AT ROYAL LABORATORY.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the Secretary of State for War, How long has the casting of steel required for projectiles been in operation at the Royal Laboratory; whether it is true that a second furnace has been recently erected there for that purpose; and, whether the undertaking given re-

cently by him in regard to steel forgings will be made to apply equally to the steel required for shells and all other purposes in the various Army Manufacturing Departments?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): Steel for projectiles was first cast in the Royal Laboratory in the financial year 1885-6. The expenditure for this purpose was authorized on January 20, 1885. The second furnace was commenced about the middle of the year 1886, provision having been made in the Estimates of 1886-7. The undertaking given by me a few days ago as to the trade applied only to steel forgings, and was in redemption of expectations previously held out, but only partially fulfilled. I may take this opportunity of correcting an answer made by me as to the furnaces recently erected for steel forgings. The furnace mentioned by me as capable of producing six-ton ingots can really produce ingots up to 10 tons. But the larger furnace of 15 tons is not completed, and there is no intention of doing so at the present time.

EDUCATION (SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT)—REGULATIONS AS TO DRAWING.

MR. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether he is aware that a strict enforcement of the Regulation just issued by the Science and Art Department, to the effect that "elementary or rough works" in drawing "will not be considered in making the awards for payments on results," will entail serious loss of income to various schools throughout the country; and, whether, having regard to the fact that the time intervening between the date of the Circular and the period when the drawings have to be sent in is not more than a month, he will consent to postpone the action of the New Rule till next year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford), in reply, said, it was never intended that the payment on results at schools should be diminished this year by the issue of the Rules contained in the Circular; and as some misapprehension seemed to be entertained in regard to it, he thought it best at once to give a guarantee that, so far as this question was concerned,

no action should be taken in regard to it until the next examination was over.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)—CARRICKMACROSS UNION.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians received notice at their last meeting of the intention of Mr. Shirley, a landlord within that union area, to evict forthwith 36 of his tenants; whether it is a fact that nearly all of those tenants about to be evicted had offered to pay from one to two years' rent each before proceedings for eviction were instituted, and that such offers were refused by Mr. Shirley; and, whether the Government will take any steps to stay these evictions, at all events until after the introduction of the promised legislation on the Land Question, based on the Report of the Cowper Commission?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said, that 36 notices of ejectment had been served, but as the Question only appeared on the Paper that morning, he had not been able to ascertain who was the landlord. He had no means of ascertaining the information asked for in the second portion of the Question.

ARMY ESTIMATES—DIVISION INTO ANNUAL AND PERMANENT.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has considered the question of dividing the Army Estimates into two portions, with a view of specifying in one portion the annual requirements for the maintenance of Her Majesty's Forces during the year, and in the other portion the expenditure on works of a permanent character, such as barracks and fortifications; and, whether he will be able to take any step in the direction of such a division in introducing the regular Estimates for the present year?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Memorandum on the Army Estimates, which will be in the hands of Members immediately, does distinguish

between different branches of expenditure, somewhat on the lines suggested by my hon. Friend.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—COMMISSIONS TO THE ARMY AND NAVY.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will consider the question of granting, in the Jubilee year, any Commissions to the Warrant Officers of the Royal Navy, and to the Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The grant of Commissions must depend on the vacancies occurring; and provision is already made for the promotion of as many Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers as is considered desirable. It would not be for the public good to increase the number on account of an event unconnected with military service. I understand from the First Lord of the Admiralty that the same view is held with regard to the Navy.

THE EXHIBITION OF 1851—LANDED PROPERTY HELD BY THE COMMISSIONERS—AMOUNT MORTGAGED TO GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What is the amount of the acreage of the land held by the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, which is mortgaged to the Greenwich Hospital for £140,000; and, whether any proposal has been made to free several acres of this property from the liabilities of the mortgage, without any reduction in its amount?

THE FIRST LORD (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The acreage of the land held by the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, now included in the mortgage to Greenwich Hospital, is about 33 acres. No proposal has been received at the Admiralty to free any portion of this property from the liabilities of the mortgage without any reduction in the amount of the loan. Of the loan to the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851 the sum outstanding is £135,199 15s. 11d.

THE CONTRACT SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY—THE ROYAL COMMISSION—IRREGULAR PUBLICATION OF EVIDENCE.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to the publication in *The Times* of what purport to be extracts from the evidence given before the Contracts Commission; whether these extracts are correct; and, whether he can explain how that journal obtained the evidence which has not yet been circulated amongst Members of this House?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk): In reply to the Question of my hon. Friend, my attention has been called to the publication. The few extracts furnished to *The Times* from the evidence are of an *ex parte* character, and do not convey the effect of the large body of evidence placed before the Committee. In answer to the last portion of the Question, I, at the urgent request of the hon. Member for West Wolverhampton (Sir William Plowden), more than once preferred, consented to his confidentially reading the Report; and I have to ask your permission, and that of the House, to read some correspondence I have had with that hon. Gentleman, which, I think, will clearly show how the evidence came to be made public. On Friday, the 4th of March, I received the following letter:—

“House of Commons, March 4, 1887.—Dear Sir,—Referring to our conversation of last night, I shall be at the Admiralty to-morrow morning at 11, and shall be glad to see the proof of the Report on Contracts, which you were good enough to say I might look at. Will you give the necessary instructions? Yours faithfully, W. PLOWDEN.”

On Saturday, the 5th, the hon. Member called at the Admiralty, and was shown the Report and the evidence on which it was based. After seeing the Report in *The Times* I wrote yesterday to the hon. Member—

“Admiralty, March 7, 1887. Dear Sir,—When you asked me on Thursday for a copy of the Report of the Contracts Committee, I stated that until it was presented to the House I could not furnish you with one, but that you might peruse it at my Office as a confidential communication. Accordingly, on Saturday, my private secretary informs me that he placed it before you, and that, with his permission, you took the print of the evidence away. This

morning I notice an article on the subject in *The Times*, with copious extracts from the evidence. As the copy given to you was the only complete copy of the evidence published, I am constrained to believe it must have been used for the purpose of these extracts. Having asked you to regard the matter as confidential, I feel that I have a right to inquire if you can throw any light upon this communication to the Press. As you were informed on Saturday, and as the article states, the Papers were only laid before the House in dummy, pending their receipt from the printers. Very respectfully yours, A. B. FORWOOD.—Sir W. Plowden, K.C.S.I., M.P.”

To which I received a reply as follows:—

“House of Commons, March 7, 1887, 4.15 p.m. Dear Sir,—I beg to reply to your letter of to-day, which has just been placed in my hands. On visiting the Admiralty on Saturday I was permitted to read, and to take notes of, the Report on Contracts. I was told it was confidential, and as such I have regarded it. But with regard to the evidence separate from the Report, which was given to me separately from the Report, I did not understand it to be confidential. On the contrary, the gentleman who gave it me gave me permission to take it away, which he refused to permit in the case of the Report, and he added words which impressed me with the public character of the evidence, saying, ‘We do not care about it.’ If I had understood for a moment the evidence was of the same confidential character as the Report; it would have been treated by me with the same reserve. I have had no communication with *The Times* or its staff on the matter; but as, after looking it over, I gave the evidence to a friend, it is quite possible this copy of the evidence, which I gather from you is the only one given out, may have furnished the extracts in *The Times* of this morning. Yours faithfully, W. PLOWDEN.—A. B. Forwood, Esq., M.P.”

The hon. Member was good enough to enclose for my information the following letter he received on Friday, March 4, from Mr. H. C. Burdett—the friend to whom, I presume, he refers in his letter of the 7th—the day he wrote appointing Saturday, the 5th, on which to peruse the Report—namely,

“Dear Sir William,—Will you come over here, as I want to explain how it will be easiest for you to get out the facts, and to understand the Report to-morrow. Believe me, faithfully yours, H. C. BURDETT.”

I am sorry the hon. Member does not state what he did with the notes which he states he took of the Report, seeing that some of the comments of *The Times* had reference to extracts from the Report. As the hon. Member for West Wolverhampton is not in his place, it is right I should add that I communicated with him, and received his assent to my reading the correspondence.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUGAR BOUNTIES.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether negotiations are progressing with Foreign Powers with a view to place the sugar industries of this country upon a fair and reciprocal footing with regard to bounties; and, if he can hold out any hopes of a mutual understanding being arrived at?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The position of the question of the sugar bounties has not changed since the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury on February 17, except that we are inquiring of certain Governments, some of them for the second time, in regard to their willingness to take part in a Conference on the subject.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE—RETIRED PAY OR PENSIONS—THE RETURN.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, When the Return relating to public servants at present living on retired pay or pensions, promised by the honourable Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) in the first Session of 1886, will be laid upon the Table?

THE SECRETARY (MR. JACKSON) (Leeds), in reply, said, the Return asked for would, he was informed, cost nearly £300, and he was very unwilling to encourage and expand the very large expenditure on Returns, especially when the information asked for was already contained in Parliamentary Papers, though not in the precise form desired. If the hon. Member would speak to him he should be glad to consider with him if the information he sought could be got in some less costly form.

MR. CONYBEARE observed that what the right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton promised the Secretary now seemed to refuse. However, he would be glad to confer with him.

MR. JACKSON said, the hon. Member was under a misapprehension. What the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton promised was not a Return so large as that now asked for.

POST OFFICE—PARCEL POST TO NEW ZEALAND.

MR. GODSON (Kidderminster) asked the Postmaster General, When will the Parcel Post system be applied to New Zealand?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The Post Office made proposals to the Government of New Zealand for a Parcel Post as far back as December, 1885, and the negotiations were almost completed in May of last year, when the Government of New Zealand decided to postpone any such arrangement with this country until it had established an Inland Parcel Post. I will again call the attention of the Government of New Zealand to the matter, and urge the completion of this desirable arrangement.

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—CONDEMNED BUILDINGS IN WHITE-CHAPEL.

LORD HENRY BRUCE (Wilts, Chippenham) asked the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether the Bell Lane Area Whitechapel Union has been condemned as containing buildings unfit for human habitation, and that the Metropolitan Board of Works has visited this site more than once and condemned it; is he aware that, in answer to a deputation of the Local Board of Works more than two years since, a promise was made that the site should be dealt with, and nothing has been yet done; and, when the matter is going to be taken in hand?

THE CHAIRMAN (SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG) (Middlesex, Hornsey): The area referred to by the noble Lord has been condemned by the Medical Officer of the Whitechapel District, and a Committee of the Metropolitan Board has inspected the site more than once. No resolution has yet been arrived at by the Board; but the Committee, when viewing the locality, expressed their opinion that a scheme should at some time be prepared for it. A deputation attended the Board on the 3rd of July, 1885; but there is no record on the Minutes of any promise on the part of the Board to deal with the site. I may add that the Board's reasons for not dealing with the area at present are substantially that there are other places with equal or superior claims, and that

the Bell Lane area immediately adjoins the Goulston Street and Flower and Dean Street areas, from which more than 3,000 persons have been displaced, while the City Authorities have also displaced large numbers of persons from the immediate vicinity. The matter will again be considered in the course of the present year.

CUSTOMS (IRELAND)—OUT-DOOR OFFICERS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) (for Mr. JUSTIN HUNTLY M'CARTHY) (Newry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that, by the Customs Regulations, permission to attend examinations for situations in other Departments will not be granted to out-door officers of less than two years' approved service exclusive of probation; whether the effect of this Rule is to prevent out-door officers from entering the Excise or Lower Division Departments; and, whether, as no such Rule is in force in any other Department of the Service, and considering that Customs officers are the worst paid men in the Service, the initial pay for the first year being only £55, the Government see their way to altering the Regulation?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said, the Rule was correctly stated by the hon. Member. It was adopted in order to obviate the inconvenience caused to the Customs Service by persons entering the Department with no intention of remaining in it. To some extent it might check the entrance of Customs officers into the Excise or Lower Division; but, in the interests of the Customs Service, it was thought desirable to maintain the Rule.

TITHE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—LEGISLATION.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he can give the House any information as to the probable date on which the Government intend to introduce into Parliament the Bill for altering the mode of Levying Tithe in England and Wales, promised in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have every reason to hope that a Bill dealing

with this Question will be introduced into the other House of Parliament shortly.

PARLIAMENT—RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury the following Question, of which I have given him private Notice, namely:—Whether it is the intention of the Government to add to the New Rules of Procedure a Rule dealing with offensive language used by Members of this House in the course of debate; and, whether the two draft Rules on this subject which appeared in *The Times* of January 28, together with the other Rules, were authorized by the Government.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I quite agree with the view which seems to be implied in the Question of the hon. Member, that if there is no authority to deal with offensive language used by one Member to another, or disorderly language in debate, then it would be necessary that a Rule of that kind should be proposed. But I am informed that the Chair is already invested with ample powers to deal with offences of that character. Therefore, it is not the intention of the Government to proceed with either of the Rules to which the hon. Member has called my attention.

SUPPLY—SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7—THE ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, To be good enough to say whether the Army or Navy Supplementary Estimates would be taken on Thursday?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is our intention to take both, Sir. The Army Estimates will be taken first.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [NINTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment proposed to the Main Question, as amended,

"That, after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate :

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part of, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate :

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members." — (*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

And which Amendment was,

In line 1, by inserting after the word "proposed," the words "a Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate." — (*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Debate resumed.

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. SPEAKER: I wish to point out that the Amendments on the Paper in the names of the hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty) and of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) are out of Order. The Amendment before the House is—

"'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith and decided without Amendment or Debate."

The Question I have to propose is, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): It would appear that hon. Gentlemen opposite are providing for a state of things when they themselves will be in the minority, by giving Mr. Speaker power to have regard to the rights of

the minority. There is, however, a still more important matter which concerns the House at large. It is this. If the Government are serious in proposing this Rule, why do they not propose that it should be made a Standing Order? Before the House consents to pass the Rule, I think we ought to know that the Rule will be made permanent.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Yes, it is proposed to make the Rule permanent.

MR. SPEAKER: The House is not now discussing the whole of the Rule, but only the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury on the Question, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. T. M. HEALY: I think it is an important matter for the House to know whether the Government, in introducing this Rule, propose to make it a Standing Order. But, passing from that, I will ask the Government, before the Amendment is inserted, to give us their definition of the value of these words, as compared with the words of the original Rule. I presume that they had fully considered the original Rule before it was submitted to the House. I presume they were suddenly seized with the idea that there might come a time when the Tory Party would find themselves in Opposition, and thereupon they decided upon requiring that the Chair should have regard to the rights of the minority. That is what the Tory Party gain by the change which has been made. I do not know, Sir, what it is exactly that you are expected to do. Are we to understand by the words "having regard to the rights of the minority," that they mean that when we elect a Speaker we are to have regard to the rights of the minority? Possibly, a Tory Speaker might take a broader view of the rights of the minority than a Speaker drawn from the Liberal side. In that respect, is it proposed to invest the Speaker with a partizan character? because every Speaker must take different views according to the Party with which he has been brought up. I cannot conceive anything worse than the change which the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman introduces into the Rule. Members sitting on these Benches come from Ireland. Now, nobody will suppose for a moment that the Speaker, who will

never be an Irishman, will ever take the same idea we take of the importance of Irish measures. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in common with the rest of the world, we will have regard for what we conceive to be the just measure of our rights. The English Members, by inserting these words, will always, as they conceive, have ample protection against the application of the Rule, whereas the Irish Members will have no protection at all. Now, if the *clôture* is to be carried out, I want to see it carried out thoroughly; I want to see a *clôture* that will be used when we have a Home Rule Bill on the Table of this House, or on the question of the Disestablishment of the Church, or any other question that may excite the opposition of the Tory Party. At present, the bearing and point of the Resolution are simply in an anti-Irish direction. It is not a real Rule which is to apply to the House in common; but it has been given a partisan character, which ought never to have been imported into the Rule at all, and which it was altogether free from as it stood originally. I do not like the *clôture* at all; but if we are to have a *clôture*, let it be a real *clôture*, and not one which is to be used against the Irish Members only. We are now asked to legislate not as the Liberal Party desire to legislate—namely, against all minorities, but against a particular minority. I think it is a matter on which we have a reasonable ground of complaint, and I trust the matter will be taken up in this spirit by the Liberal Party. The Rule is proposed at this moment so that it may be applied to the discussion of a particular Bill in the distance; but the time may come when the Liberal Party are in power, and may ask to apply it to the question of the Disestablishment of the English Church. It is probable that we may then be called together to change the Rule once more, because it may not be applied to a Tory minority, on account of the Speaker having regard to the reasonable rights of the minority. A minority either has rights or it has not, and if it has rights it is entitled to exhaust those rights. You are determined to put down the liberty of speech and criticism. You say that free speech is a gross evil, and yet, at the same time, the Speaker is to have regard to the rights of the minority. As I have said, a minority

either has rights or it has no rights, and this closure is not a Parliamentary closure, but an anti-Irish closure. The demand for the change of the Rule did not come from this side of the House, but from the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget). If we had conceived that it was necessary for our protection, we should have proposed it. But no such proposal came from us; we do not ask for it, and we shall oppose it. What I say is that the Tory Party have taken pretty good care to guard their own rights, and I would ask the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), whom I see in his place, if he really sees any useful object in carrying a *clôture* which shall be used against Radical measures only? The Tory Party are providing a shield and a buckler for themselves, which they may always be ready to avail themselves of when Radical measures are brought forward. Let us suppose that the Liberals are in power, with a Liberal Speaker in the Chair, and that some measure in regard to the House of Lords is brought on, and the Speaker refuses to have regard to what the Tory Party conceives to be the rights of the minority. There will inevitably spring up a question of debate as to the Speaker's interpretation of the Rule, and it will be made a matter of contention whether the Speaker has interpreted the Rule fairly. Surely that would be a most unfortunate state of things. I do not know that we Irish Members ought to care very much about it, because we shall not be here, or, if we are, we are not likely to take more than a humdrum interest in the debates of the House. But it is a very serious matter for the consideration of the Liberal Party. Personally I have always adhered to the Radical programme, and I am anxious that the Tory Party should not have the opportunity which this Rule will give them, of carrying on continual obstruction. There never was a Party guilty of grosser, more deliberate, and more persistent obstruction than the Tory Party in the past—as for instance, the Ballot Bill and the Redistribution Bill. Of course, I am speaking historically of obstruction, for I know it would not be Parliamentary to accuse anybody of obstruction in the present tense. And now, in addition to the ordinary amenities of the House, they

are getting something they never had before, and the House is recognizing something that never existed before. There is no such thing as the rights of a minority; individually, Members have rights as such, but there is no such thing as the rights of the minority. How is the Speaker to know whether there is a minority or not? Is he to judge from the amount of obstruction offered? Now, for the first time we are engaged in giving a Parliamentary birth to the monstrous abortion—a Parliamentary minority. The Rule is simply intended as a protection to the Tory Party at the time they may be in Opposition, and I maintain that a Rule conceived in that sense is altogether an illusory Rule, framed in anything but a frank spirit, and altogether contrary in its application to the doctrine of the Liberal Party, that it should be applied equally to all Parties. The Government doubtless expect to find themselves in a minority very soon, and when that time arrives, with the assistance of their Liberal-Unionist Friends, they will have made a handsome provision for themselves as a minority. Seeing that the Amendment is a Tory offspring, its paternity alone renders me very suspicious of it, and, in the absence of any satisfactory explanation from the Government, I believe that in its working it will be found to be illusory, and in its ultimate effects, deplorable.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not surprised that the hon. and learned Member opposite (Mr. T. M. Healy) objects to the insertion of these particular words in the Amendment. In his opposition in this matter, the hon. and learned Member and his Friends are only consistent, because they have uniformly opposed all the suggestions which have been made for the amendment of the Rules by the Government and their supporters. The hon. and learned Member asks, first of all, whether the Government are prepared to make this Rule a Standing Order of the House? At present I can only say that I am in the habit of proceeding step by step; but if the House adopts the Rule I shall be in a position to propose to make it a Standing Order as soon as I can. The hon. and learned Member severely criticized the motives which have induced the Government to propose this Amendment. I am afraid that the attitude of

suspicion assumed by the hon. and learned Gentleman towards the Government is not likely to be removed by any observations which I can make. I will only say, for my own part, that in proposing the Amendment I have honestly endeavoured to meet a suggestion which I understood was generally acceptable, and not in order to expose the Irish Party to any peculiar, special, or personal penalties whatever. Having attempted to the best of my ability to satisfy what I felt to be a general feeling on both sides of the House, I cannot of course claim to have satisfied the House as a whole. I distinctly repudiate and disavow the intention which the hon. and learned Gentleman has attributed to the Government. My desire is to secure the just rights of the minority in all circumstances, and not to exclude any minority whatever. I think I shall best consult the feeling of the House, and shall not be wanting in respect for hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, if I decline to debate over again a question which was exhaustively discussed on Thursday last. We then debated, at considerable length, whether the words objected to by the hon. and learned Member should stand part of the Resolution, and they were affirmed by a large majority of the House. I think, therefore, that I shall best consult the progress of Business by refraining from entering again into the argument previously used in support of the alteration.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that you have ruled my Amendments to be out of Order. May I ask, Sir, respectfully, for the ground upon which you have so ruled?

MR. SPEAKER: The ground upon which I have ruled them out of Order is that they would stultify the action of the House. The House has refused to sanction the principle that debate shall precede the Motion for Closure. Therefore the Question, "That the Question be now put forthwith" means that it be put immediately, and, when that has been decided in the affirmative to allow debate to arise on putting the Main Question would be but a stultification of the House.

MR. PARNELL: I would respectfully submit that the House has not yet decided the question as to whether there shall be a debate on the question of clôture in any of the Divisions which

have been taken up to the present time. The House has refused to allow a debate upon the Original Question to be continued after a Motion for Closure has been made; but it has not yet decided the question whether there shall be a debate on the Motion for Closure itself. That is the question I sought to deal with in my first Amendment. Then, in regard to my second Amendment, it bears upon an entirely different question. It seeks to provide that there shall be a Division on the question of closure, because the rule, as it now stands, leaves the question as to whether there shall be a Division or not entirely open; and I submit that we ought to ask the House for guarantees that there shall be a Division on the question, and that the closure of debate shall not be decided by the operation of a subsequent Rule to be moved by the right hon. Gentleman, providing that a Division may be dispensed with altogether at the option of the Speaker. This is of importance as a point of Order, because there is a question of numbers that enters into the Rule, and I fail to see how the Speaker is to decide as to numbers if he is to refrain from taking a Division. My second Amendment, it will be seen, has no reference whatever to any question that has hitherto been discussed or decided by the House up to the present moment. In reference to my third Amendment, to leave out the words "Amendment or," that has no reference to the continuance of debate, but of the right I claim of moving a formal Amendment to the Motion for the adoption of the closure. I would, therefore, respectfully submit that my three Amendments are in Order.

MR. SPEAKER: I have examined the question very carefully, and, putting the three Amendments of the hon. Member together, the sentence would not run as English. The Rule, if the Amendments were adopted, would read—

"The Question, 'That the Question be now put, shall be put if debate arises after period not exceeding one hour, decided, unless negatived or agreed to, after a Division without Debate.'"

That would not be a sensible reading at all, and I think the sentence does not run as English. The hon. Gentleman asks that the House, having previously refused to sanction debate, should then afford an opportunity for the discussion of a Motion that the Question be now

put. It would be an absurdity to allow the Question to be further debated, whether the Question can be now put, and, therefore, I have no hesitation in ruling that the Amendments of the hon. Member, both individually and collectively, are out of Order.

MR. PARNELL: I submit respectfully to your ruling; but I hope I may be allowed to point out that it has been the custom of the House to frame Amendments to a clause as it stands, and not with regard to the manner in which it may be altered hereafter.

MR. SPEAKER: Under no possible circumstances could the Amendment of the hon. Member be made compatible with the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury. The hon. Member would be in Order in omitting line 1 to line 2 inclusive; but it would be impossible to bring the Amendments on that paper in harmony with the question now before the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask a question? Am I to understand that you are now ruling that it will be impossible for any Member to move Amendments in the clause of any Bill—?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I have simply ruled on the question before the House, which is—"That these words be there inserted."

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I take it that the question now before the House is that the Question be forthwith put?

MR. SPEAKER: No. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury is now before the House, and the question is, "that those words," meaning the whole of the Amendment, "be there inserted."

MR. DILLON: Then I take it that the whole of the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury is now before the House, and it is an Amendment which has undoubtedly been framed with a view of directing the whole force of these Rules against the Irish Party. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to get up in this House and deny it. We cannot look into the minds of men and tell what their hopes may be; but we are perfectly competent to understand what are likely to be the effects of any particular Rule or Amendment, and to ascertain whether the opinions we express are shared by the public who take an interest in these proceedings. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House

said that he had no intention of drawing any distinction between minorities and minorities. All I can say is that, if the right hon. Gentleman had no intention, his followers have had a very decided intention on the subject. They evidently did not like the Rule as it at first stood. I do not wonder much at that. They desired to frame such a Rule as would enable them to repeat in this House the proceedings which went on long before the Irish Party was formed here—in the days when a right hon. Gentleman, afterwards Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. James Lowther), and the right hon. and learned Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) led a forlorn hope in this House, whose tactics put those of the Irish Obstructionists to shame. The Tory Party now want to have the power of doing the same thing when they again find themselves in Opposition. I have witnessed the way in which the Tories, when seated on the Opposition Benches, wasted hour after hour in a manner that must have excited the admiration of every Irish Member, and now they fancy, if they can pass this Amendment, that they will be able to secure in future protection for themselves. It is all very well to tell us that we shall be secured in the protection of the Chair. That will depend upon who is in the Chair, and without intending to cast any reflection upon any occupant of the Chair in this House, I say that I, as an Irish Member, utterly decline, as far as I am capable, willingly to submit the rights of the Irish minority to the mercy or discretion of the occupant of the Chair for the time being. We know perfectly well that we have not the same hold on whoever may be the occupant of the Chair as the Conservative Members may have. Their position in England is of a totally different character from ours. [*Cries of "Hear, hear!" from the Ministerial Benches.*] Yes; "Hear, hear," hon. Members say. I know it is different, and that is the reason they fully calculate on being allowed, when in Opposition, to carry on such operations as distinguished the Fourth Party in previous years, and which received the protection of the Chair, when they only numbered three. We, although we number 85, for pursuing the same course would be promptly put down. Certainly it would be an amusing spectacle to see five-sixths of the Representatives of a

country silenced by the Chair, in order to remove an obstacle in the path of the Government; but it is a spectacle we cannot be expected to submit to tamely when we see persons under the protection of the Chair who have not one-tenth of the interest we have, permitted to waste the time of the House for the simple purpose of assisting themselves to climb into Office. I have seen four hon. Gentlemen on that Bench holding the majority for hours at bay. If we attempt to resist the passing of bad laws in this House, we shall run the risk of being put down by the Chair; whereas other Members will be permitted to act as they please, because they are scions of the aristocracy — sons of Dukes, or sons of Prime Ministers. I should like to see the Chair put down the son of a noble Lord who is at the head of the Government. He would be allowed to lead any forlorn hope and to keep the whole Liberal Party at bay as long as he chose to do so, while the Representatives of the entire Irish people would be promptly silenced. We know that we shall be able to obtain very little of the protection of the Chair, and that we shall have to trust to ourselves for what protection we can get. We are convinced, however, that it will be ample enough for our purposes. At the same time, we have learned by painful experience not to part with a single right as long as we can stick to it. These debates have now gone on for a considerable length, and we are told that the House and the country are tired of the prolonged discussion; so am I, and so I dare say are most of the Members of this House; but they would be more tired still if they could realize that we are engaged in an absolutely worthless and profitless labour. It is not the first time that the House has been engaged in framing a Resolution of this nature, and this is one of the reasons why I intend to struggle against the Amendment, and to oppose the Rule as far as I am able to do so. In my opinion, these Rules will be worth no more when they are passed than the paper on which they are printed, and in discussing the Amendment we are simply wasting the time of the House without advancing, by a single inch, on the road you desire to travel. The blame of waste of time must be entirely on the heads of those who, by such Amendments as these and

by such Rules, are under the delusion that they can put down 85 Members who are commissioned to speak for an entire people. By the Rule, if this Amendment had not been put in it, you might have been able to put down real Obstruction; but by the insertion of the Amendment the Government have made it manifest that they have no intention of putting down Obstruction in the House. What they really desire is to put down the honest attempts of men who have a people at their back—the Irish Party—whom they conceive to be an obstacle in their path. Therefore, this Amendment is simply intended to protect the real Obstructionists of the Business of the House. Although we are opposed in principle to this Rule, and opposed to it on the ground that it is entirely unnecessary, because the obstruction and delay caused by the action of the Irish Members in this House would cease if you did justice to Ireland and allowed us to have our way—*[Laughter from the Ministerial Benches.]*

—Yes; I repeat, if you allowed us to have our way; and I will say more, that we will have our way in the end. I say that if you will only do justice to Ireland, and will allow—what you will have to do in the long run—namely, the right, to the Representatives of Ireland, of legislating for their own country—you would need no such Rules and no such waste of time. I am opposed in principle to the whole of these Rules; because you are simply trying to deal not with a disease itself, but with the symptoms of a disease, and you know very well that you cannot cure a disease by endeavouring to combat the symptoms. As the Rule originally stood, it was an honest Rule which might, in the hands of a strong and determined Leader of the House, be employed for a useful purpose; but, as it now stands, it is thoroughly dishonest, and may be used to put down an honest attempt to alter or oppose a bad law, and in all probability will never be used when most needed and most required. The House has been reminded of the determined stand which, some years ago, was taken against the continuance of the practice of flogging in the Army. The opponents were few in number but they were persistent in their opposition, and in the end they prevailed. If this Rule had been in existence, flogging in the Army

might still be practised. What I complain of is, that hereafter this Rule may be put in force, to put down all discussions upon important questions of that nature, while we may have a repetition of what we have repeatedly seen before, when three officers, who had no Army behind them, were able to obtain the protection of the Chair and keep the entire House at bay.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): Now that the question of the intervention of the Chair in the application of the closure has been disposed of, there is no capital or essential difference between the existing Rule of Closure and the new Rule which has been proposed by the Government, and I think that the discussion of the subject has proceeded far enough. The principle of closure without the intervention of the Chair was decided by the House four years ago; and four nights ago—on Friday last—it was decided that the sanction of the Chair should be required. Those two important principles having been disposed of, I really fail to see how any subsequent Amendments to the proposed Rule can escape the charge—I suppose I must not say of Obstruction—but, at any rate, of superfluity. I would, therefore, venture to appeal to hon. Members opposite to assist the Government in bringing this discussion to a close as soon as possible, in order that we may be allowed to get at the real Business of the Session. I make this appeal not on behalf of my own Party alone, but for the credit and reputation of the House in which all Parties are equally interested. We know very well that hon. Members from Ireland sit here for the purpose of proving that the government of Ireland by England is impossible, and it is our business, not only to deprecate but to defeat that policy. We have defeated it already—*[Cries of "Question!"]*

MR. SPEAKER: The question of the government of Ireland is not now before the House.

MR. BAUMANN: My only desire was to assist the Government in the passing of this Rule, so that we may get at the real Business of the Session. Of course, I am aware of the great difficulties of getting at the real Business of the Session as long as there are Members in this House like the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere).

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is entirely out of Order in the remarks he is now making.

MR. BAUMANN: Perhaps I may be allowed then to ask the House to terminate this discussion. Hon. Members sitting on this side of the House have been accused of having exhibited impatience at the prolongation of the debate. The impatience we feel, and which we may have occasionally exhibited, is, I believe, but a very mild reflection of the impatience which is felt in the country. I hope that before the Sitting closes, the debate will have been brought to an end by the application of the existing clôture.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Baumann) has expressed an anxiety to bring the debate to a close; but I am afraid that if we act with undue haste in this matter the hon. Member himself and his Friends, at no very distant date, will be ready to believe that, in order to prevent a few hours weariness, they may have entailed on themselves a good many hours of repentance. This is a case in which the Government are undoubtedly anxious to escape from all responsibility. They do not find themselves in a particularly comfortable position, and in order to evade the responsibility which directly belongs to them, they are, by this Amendment, attempting to throw it upon the Chair. The Chair already possesses very large powers, and we have seen them properly and discreetly exercised. Let me illustrate that, by putting what may be, perhaps, regarded as an extreme case. Not long ago, Sir, you ruled that we might not discuss a Motion if that Motion in any way anticipates another Motion on the same question put down for a future day. Then, what is to happen in the event of some hon. Member on the first day of the Session putting down a Motion that he intends to call attention to the state of the Army, the state of the Navy, the state of the Civil Services, and the state of the nation generally? It appears to me that under your ruling, if such a Motion were placed on the Paper, it would shut out all discussion on any subject whatever. At the same time, I am of opinion that even if you carry this Rule, a much smaller minority than that of the Irish Members will be able indefinitely to postpone and put off discussion, and to

prevent a conclusion from being arrived at upon any particular Bill. Therefore, from whatever point of view I look at the Amendment, I cannot see that its operation will result in any good; it will not prevent Obstruction if hon. Members are determined to resort to it, nor will it be a protection; but, on the contrary, there will be great peril and danger attached to it. It will expose the internal mind of the Chair, and render it open to the influence of external circumstances. I find that there is no harder task than to ascertain the individual mind of my own constituents. How much more difficult then must it be for the Chair to ascertain all the circumstances that may lead to opposition to a Bill, and still less to know all the circumstances outside which may influence large minorities. There may be a very large minority indeed outside this House, although supported here by something less than a score of hon. Members. What the Government have done is to infringe the rights and privileges of private Members, and to add to the perils and dangers surrounding the authority of the Chair.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will be very grateful to the hon. Member for the Peckham Division of Camberwell (Mr. Baumann), who protested against the time wasted in this discussion, and then proceeded to prolong it by a number of very useless remarks. I feel bound to protest against the Resolution as it now stands; and when the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House says that its object is not to put down the Irish minority, he makes a larger draft upon my credulity than I am prepared to give him. I frankly avow that I am myself in favour of clôture, and of a strong and drastic clôture. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) is the living embodiment of the argument in favour of such a clôture. The Obstruction carried on by the noble Lord and other Members associated with him will have suggested to any rational mind the necessity for some remedy for the protection of the majority and the dignity of this Assembly. But does that Rule proposed by the right hon. Gentleman provide for such a contingency in the future? Every Member who goes

into the Lobby against the Resolution will vote in favour of a real *clôture*, because they will vote against a sham *clôture*. This Rule, as it has been amended by the right hon. Gentleman, is for the purpose of protecting Obstruction instead of putting down Obstruction as it has been practised by the Tory Party. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Amendment is proposed as a concession; to whom has he made a concession? There were several Amendments proposed from these Benches, not a single one of which has been accepted; and the only Amendments accepted by the Government have been those suggested by the right hon. Member for North Hants (Mr. Selater-Booth) and the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somersetshire (Sir Richard Paget)—in other words, the Amendments proposed by the Tory Members of this House. To say that the Amendment is the result of concessions to all parts of the House, when the Amendments from every side except the Tory Party have been rejected, is the greatest abuse of language that any Leader of this House has ever been guilty of. The hon. Member for the Peckham Division of Camberwell told us that a real Rule of *clôture* already exists. Then what an abuse of the Forms of the House and a waste of time it is to pass a Rule which leaves us in exactly the same position we now occupy. If the statement of the hon. Member is correct, why should we have been for weeks pottering and tinkering at the Rules? There can be no wonder if the constituencies cry out against this nerveless and flabby legislation. We strongly protest against the intervention of the Chair, not to put down Obstruction, but to maintain the dignity of the Chair. If the Rule is passed, the Obstruction of the Fourth Party of the dim and distant future will be just as much safeguarded as if it had never been passed at all. Under the existing Rule the closure may be passed without debate, and it may be carried without a Division. If the present Rule is carried, it will be in the power of the Chair to call on Members to rise in their places, and it will, therefore, be in the power of the Speaker at once to apply the closure. Accordingly, the closure may be carried, not only without debate, but without Division.

But while the Rule will have this evil effect, I do not believe that it will protect the House from Obstruction. The First Lord of the Treasury has denied that it is to be used against the Irish Members at once; but I think the right hon. Gentleman has admitted that the main object in passing it now is to carry a measure of coercion for Ireland. It is an abuse of language, therefore, to tell us that the closure is not really directed against the Irish minority, and seeing that it is intended for Party purposes, I call upon every Liberal and Radical Member to combine with the Irish Members in resisting it.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): The Government have for some time been complaining of their inability to get on with the Business of the country, and when they get this weapon we shall see how much more successful they will be in pressing forward legislation than they have been in the past. I do not think the Rule will be of the slightest use to them in helping on their policy, or in forwarding the Business of the country. At first we had a positive proposal, requiring, very properly, the intervention of the Chair; but that proposal did not commend itself to some of the Members of the Tory Party, and some of them suggested an Amendment, which the Leader of the House has accepted with a slight alteration, changing it from the positive to the negative. Instead of the previous consent of the Chair being necessary, it is now provided that it shall not be withheld. The effect will be that it will be used by Members of the Party in power, not Members of the Government, but some Members of no consideration, who will endeavour to obtain Parliamentary notoriety by constantly getting up and moving "That the Question be now put." Let me remind the House that all reforms at first have had but few supporters, and that the tendency of this Rule will be to stifle all minorities. If the Rule had been enforced years ago, flogging in the Army would still have been a domestic institution. Its only effect now will be to introduce the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees into the arena of Party politics, which, I believe, will be a loss to the House at large, never to be compensated by any immediate cessation of Obstruction or by any advantage the

Government may obtain by securing the immediate closure of a debate. I shall vote against the Amendment, because I believe that it is badly conceived, badly drafted, and because I believe it will totally fail in effecting the object the Government have in view.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I should like the House to understand what the meaning of the Amendment really is. It relates to a Rule which allows no debate, and which is aimed at one class of Members only. I can understand you, Sir, having your mind made up and being satisfied that the closure should not be applied, and in that case the person moving the closure would be very easily disposed of. I can, also, understand your mind being made up that the closure ought to be applied; but I contemplate cases in which you desire to give a fair and impartial decision where there is doubt in your mind; and I ask what provision there is here to give you that information and leading which you will desire to have? I say that the House ought to reject this Amendment, because it dispenses with all those things which should make the decision of the Chair a fair and just one, and with which the conscience and mind of the House would thoroughly coincide. It is for that reason that we propose an Amendment to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. It is proposed that the moment a Question is put from the Chair an hon. Member may rise and move "That the Question be now put;" but the proposal goes further—it says that when a Member has moved no other Member can rise and remonstrate. Under those circumstances, hon. Members will have no opportunity of knowing when the Question is coming on, and you, Sir, will get no information as to the state of Parties at the time. I can understand that there will be many cases in which the Chairman could give no decision; for instance, in Committee on a Bill in which there are a large number of clauses; and I say, if the spirit of the Amendment we propose is not met by the Government, we shall be frequently landed in a position which will cause the House to regret that it gave this power without at the same time making provision that the mind of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees should be enlightened on the state of the mind of

the minority. The Speaker or Chairman must first discover that there is a minority; secondly, he must discover what are the rights of the minority, and that, too, without the minority being heard. It is unreasonable to ask that we should put that duty on you; and, therefore, I appeal to the House to reject the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman which, so far as I can see, is infinitely worse than the original proposal of the Government, because the presumption in that is against closure of debate, whereas the Amendment contains a presumption in favour of it.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has on several occasions met us with the argument that hon. Members on this side of the House are uniformly opposed to the closure; but certainly, if that is so, it does not affect the present argument against closure. The Government, however, have distinctly declined to receive or pay any attention to the arguments which have been urged against the Rule being allowed to retain its present form. I am opposed to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman because it does not give any opportunity for adequate debate, and because it does not give any definition of the rights of minorities. It would, in my opinion, as has been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), be better and more straightforward to accept the closure pure and simple by a bare majority than with this Amendment, framed on lines which are known only to Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench, and of which we take the liberty of doubting the genuineness and sincerity. The right hon. Gentleman is apparently indignant that hon. Members on these Benches should entertain any suspicion of the *bona fides* of the Government with regard to this Amendment; but we have nothing to do with good intentions here; we take the words as we find them before us; and we find the Amendment is proposed with a view to protect those who do not require protection, whereas to those who do require it it affords no protection whatever. A large minority can take care of itself; but a small minority fighting against odds and opposed by a large majority would have little opportunity of making their voice heard if this

Amendment is passed. The Amendment does not make provision either to protect the rights of minorities or that proper debate should be had. For these reasons I oppose the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury; and I believe if there were a large body of independent Conservatives in the House—as there were in former times—that they would hesitate very long before they supported an Amendment like this, which utterly fails to cope with the question, and which experience will show to be the most unsatisfactory.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Sir, I can scarcely think that the Government at all understood the scope of this Amendment when they proposed to attach it to the original Rule; but, at any rate, I am convinced that in framing it they have been very unfortunate because it deprives you, Sir, of that discretionary power which the original Rule placed in your hands. If we compare the Rule as it originally stood with the amended Rule proposed to be substituted for it, we shall find that your liberty and discretion with regard to the closure is entirely destroyed. We say that according to the original Rule you would have to be consulted before the closure could come into operation, but that under the Rule as it is proposed to be amended by the Government you will be dragged into the question—so to speak—with your hands tied. With regard to the discussion which has taken place upon these Rules, it is to be deplored that the Chair has been brought into the matter at all; but I am of opinion that, if the Chair is to be brought in, it is preferable that the Speaker should be allowed a full and free deliberation before being called upon to exercise this stringent Rule of closure. It is, therefore, the opinion of many hon. Members that the Rule originally proposed left you more liberty than would result under the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman. This, Sir, is the great disadvantage of bringing the Chair into action after the Motion for the closure rather than before it, and it constitutes a very wide consideration which ought to be taken into account by the Government and the First Lord of the Treasury before pressing this Amendment to a Division. I am convinced that by adopting this proposal he would consult not only the interests of free debate in the future, but the

wishes of this House at the present moment, and of a great many hon. Members who will follow him into the Lobby out of attachment to their Party. I am sure that there must be many hon. Members on both sides of the House who, through the exigencies and constraints of Party, will be found going into the Lobby to support this Amendment against their convictions which they would be otherwise glad to exercise in favour of the rights of minorities and the general freedom of debate. I have stated my belief that the Government and the First Lord of the Treasury can scarcely have any idea of the scope of the Amendment which they propose, and I am surprised that the First Lord of the Treasury should stick so tenaciously to this proposal. For these reasons I ask the Government and the First Lord of the Treasury, in whose name this Amendment stands, either to alter the wording of the Amendment or to withdraw it altogether, and put forward such a Motion for closure as will secure the willing acceptance of the hon. Members of this House. If we are to have the yoke, let it be placed upon us with our own consent and in accordance with our own judgment.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Sir, it has only been within the last few days that the words “rights of minorities” have been introduced. The Rule says that a Member rising in his place may claim to move—

“That the Question be now put, and unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, ‘That the Question be now put,’ shall be put forthwith and decided without Amendment or debate.”

But I ask, what is the minority? That is a question open to a good deal of doubt. There will, for instance, be doubt and difficulty upon that point even if an hon. Member changed his usual seat and sat in any other place in the House. I believe that many hon. Members would argue this point when the hon. Member making a Motion was not in his place. We are met here with a whole series of alterations, and because we want to understand where we are putting our foot we are found fault with by the right hon. Gentleman. The First Lord of the Treasury did not attempt to-night to explain what would be the practical working of this Rule, but he met the appeal

of one hon. Gentleman who tried to push it to its legitimate issue by deprecating any further debate. I assert not only that these words are not in the best form that could be adopted in this House, but that they do not embody the sense which the right hon. Gentleman himself intended to put into the Rule. The Rule says "unless it appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House." How can you lay down a Rule which is to give power to a Member of the House to rise in his place and claim that the Question be now put, and yet contemplate that his doing so is an abuse of the Rules of the House? I say, Sir, that it is the privilege of any hon. Member, and that it can never appear to the Chair that he is abusing the rights of the House by doing so. I will not repeat the objections which have been urged to the use of the words "rights of the minority;" but I think it would be well that there should be some explanation from the Treasury Bench as to the meaning of the term "minority." I think it is altogether abrogating the rights of hon. Members, and of occasional minorities in this House to retain this expression. There has been no Constitutional or Parliamentary recognition of the term, and if you adopt the language of this Amendment I cannot but feel that it will result in serious danger and difficulty. If I could speak as an Englishman I should say that Party Government and Party feeling is carried too far in this House for purposes of general legislation on the needs of the country, and I contend that this Rule is setting a premium on that Party feeling, because it only recognizes the interests of the Government of the day, and the "minority." I shall be borne out by many hon. Members when I say that there has always been in this House a Party which owed no specific allegiance to the Government, and who do not follow any particular leader. But there have been not one but several minorities, who have by dint of perseverance and by the latitude allowed by the Forms of the House, succeeded in impressing their views not alone upon the House itself, but upon the country. These in the future will disappear. I believe that the tendency of the Rule, and especially the words we are asked to insert in it, is in that direction. Speaking from the Irish point of view, of

course, we are forced naturally into tentative opposition to every one of these Rules, because we look upon them as directed against ourselves and our country. We look on them as an expedient of the Government for occupying that time which should be devoted by this House in solving the problem as to how you are to reach practical legislation for the good of Ireland. I would certainly say that the Conservative Party seem to me to be only just occupying this ground and withdrawing inch by inch from a position which they know to be untenable. The proceed with these Rules because they have nothing else on which they can agree with those who permit them to remain in power. I wish the House to understand that there should be some means by which irresponsible Members should be prevented from rising in their place and interrupting a debate most useful in itself, with the Motion "That the Question be now put." There are many questions during the discussion of which no one but a few specialists are left in the House. Let us take for instance a debate relating to Scotch or Irish affairs. It may happen under the circumstances I have described, that a Member who has not been present, and who does not feel the weight of the grievance brought before the House, may come in and move "That the Question be now put." I do object, Sir, that it should be within the privilege of such a Member coming into this House without, perhaps, having heard one word of the debate, without having looked into the merits of the question, and merely because he felt in the mood at the moment to jump up and move "That the Question be now put." In my opinion the original Rule is better than the Amendment proposed by the First Lord of the Treasury, because the Rule provides that the consent of the Speaker should be previously obtained. I think it only reasonable to expect that before a Member could rise and interrupt an important debate, there should be some form by which that Motion of his should be tested before it is sprung on the Speaker, and before the Speaker declares either that it is an infringement of the rights of minorities or an abuse of the Rules of the House. Finally, Sir, I venture to express the opinion that if in place of going into this destructive legislation the House would

[*Ninth Night.*]

apply itself to its broader and better functions, there would be a far nobler record of the Session.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 160; Noes 70: Majority 90.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Sir, I rise to propose the omission of the words—

“When the Motion, ‘That the Question be now put,’ has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair.”

I have placed this Amendment on the Paper in order to save the rights of hon. Members with regard to debate upon a Main Question, and also to save the rights of hon. Members with regard to the moving of subsequent Amendments. Supposing that under the first paragraph of the Rule a Motion has been made, and the consent of the Chair has not been withheld, “That the Question be now put,” and the Question is to be decided without Amendment or debate, and that Question happens to be an Amendment to the Main Question;—under the second paragraph of the Rule it is provided that a similar Motion may be made in the same way as the first Motion with regard to the Main Question, and that the debate on the Main Question may also be brought to an end in the same fashion. Let me take the case where I or any other hon. Member desire to move;—under the Rule as it stands not only would debate on the Main Question be brought to an end, but no opportunity would be afforded of moving any second or third Amendment. I think this is the time to ask the right hon. Gentleman what provision he proposes to introduce into this clause to fulfil his pledge with regard to saving the rights of hon. Members, who put down Amendments in Committee of Supply, and also to clauses of Bills. We have had a debate on the question with regard to Committee of Supply, and during that debate the right hon. Gentleman promised that he would consider how he could meet the wishes which many hon. Members of this House had expressed, that there should be some safeguard inserted in the Rule which would preserve to the Members of the Committee the right of moving several separate reduc-

tions of a Vote. It is manifest, as the Rule now stands, that no such safeguard exists. I cannot accept the Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman has put down as a satisfactory fulfilment of his pledge, and I must ask him to fulfil it in a more satisfactory way, that is, to agree to the insertion of a more real safeguard. At present we have no safeguard whatever. Therefore, we are entitled to ask for some real and tangible safeguard for the purpose of insuring that there shall be this full and free discussion which the right hon. Gentleman has declared so repeatedly it is his intention to afford to the House. The words “That the Question be now put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or debate,” bring into force the summary process of the Rule as provided by the first paragraph against the original Question or the secondary Question, either on a Motion in Committee of Supply or in the discussion of the clauses of a Bill. In the first place, it provides that the Rule may be brought into force against all Amendments in Committee of Supply, and in either case it provides for stopping debate on the Main Question. You will find that by this Rule the Chair would have to deal even with a Question which has not been proposed at all. As I understand the matter, the Question, “That the Clause be added to the Bill,” is not put until all the Amendments have been disposed of. The Chairman of Committee calls the clause by number; he then calls on hon. Members who have Amendments on the Paper to move their Amendments, one at a time, and it is not until those Amendments have been put, that he comes to the separate Question, “That the Clause stand part of the Bill.” Now in this Rule it is provided that the Question “That the Clause stand part of the Bill” shall be now put; that is to say, that a Question which has never been put from the Chair at all, or an Amendment which has never been discussed, shall be put before Amendments are moved by any Members of the House. These are important considerations, and I mention them in order to show how necessary it is that some safeguard should be inserted. What you propose to give to any Minister of the Crown in the second part of this Rule is the right of saying what Amendments shall be put in Committee of Supply, or what reductions shall be

moved, and in Committee upon a Bill what Amendments shall be moved to clauses. This practically puts it in the power of a Minister to pass a Bill *en bloc* through the House without any discussion whatever upon any of its clauses. The question under discussion now is a very difficult one, and requires more explicit safeguards than the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) has hitherto suggested. I want to know in what way the right hon. Gentleman proposes to guard the freedom or liberty of debate in Committee of the Whole House, when the Chairman is in the Chair, and when, above all things, it is necessary there should be some safeguard other than that which has been proposed by the Government? Let me turn to the question of the necessity for some additional safeguards in Committee of the Whole House, other than that which exists. Now, Sir, there is a wide difference in the position of the Speaker of the House of Commons and in the position of the Chairman of Ways and Means. The Speaker is usually selected for his impartiality and his great knowledge of the Business of the House. He is not a partizan. In the words of the celebrated Speaker, Speaker Lenthall, he is a servant of the House; he is not its master, or the master's mate; he takes his directions from the House, and he is the guardian of its Order. He takes no part in our debates; but he can give a casting vote when Parties are evenly divided; but this vote he never thinks of recording. The position of the Chairman of Committees is an entirely different one. Of course, Mr. Speaker, when I refer, on the one hand, to the Speaker, and, on the other hand, to the Chairman of Committees, I do not speak in eulogy of the one and in disparagement of the other. I do not speak of yourself, or of the present Chairman of Committees; I simply wish to compare the position and functions of the two Offices, and the character of the men who usually hold them, without reference to individuals. The Chairman of Committees is always an intensely Party man. He does not partake in any sense of the nature of the Speaker, nor does his Office partake of the nature of the Office of the Speaker. He himself, as a matter of common custom, frequently joins in debate on disputed questions, and takes the side of

his Party when the Speaker is in the Chair—when he is not acting as Chairman of Committees. The Speaker never does this; when his functions cease for the moment—when, for instance, the House is in Committee—the Speaker is not present in the House. He does not address the House, or take any part in the Divisions of the House. The Chairman, on the contrary, is entitled to speak on all questions, and frequently does speak. He has not the experience or knowledge of the Rules of the House that the Speaker has, and, consequently, a minority may be justly pardoned if they fear entrusting themselves, during proceedings in Committee on Bills, and during proceedings in Committee of Supply—to which this Amendment I move more particularly applies—to the power of such an official, without some checks and safeguards other than those which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has introduced into his Rule so far. Moreover, the Chairman of Committees is liable to have his place taken at a moment's notice, without debate or Division, by anybody at all whom the Government choose to put in the Chair. We have all witnessed, in recent years, the summary fashion in which, when the Chairman of Committees has been tired out with a prolonged discussion, and has needed rest, or for any other purpose of his own, has been obliged to leave the Chair, his Successor is inducted. No Motion is made, no Division takes place; in fact, the selection of a Deputy for the Chairman of Committees is the most summary and drastic process known. The substitute for the Chairman of Committees may be anybody at all; he may be wanting in all those qualities which our present Chairman of Committees undoubtedly has; he may be wanting in all the qualities which enable him to respect the rights of minorities, which the present Chairman of Committees possesses in such a remarkable degree; and we may have some Government partizan, some nobody, thrust into the Chair, without it being possible to protest, or to take any action against such substitution. And it is possible that, under such circumstances, such a partizan Chairman, such a Member of the House, may be carried away by his partizan feelings and by his passions of the moment, and very probably will be

carried away, into inflicting grave injury upon the rights of the minority. See where your safeguards come in. The original Rule stands, "If the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained." Now it stands, "The assent of the Chair, as aforesaid, not having been withheld." A still more slender safeguard than that which originally obtained in the Rule. We Irish Members cannot divest ourselves, in the consideration of this question, from the fact that this Rule is being carried expressly for the purpose of hurrying through a Coercion Bill; and that whatever protection an ordinary minority may have from injustice, such protection will be entirely wanting in regard to us, when the excitement and feelings of the House mounts, and everybody—or, at least, all the English Members of the majority—believe it is necessary to do something desperate, quick, and speedy, in order that the State may be saved. We have had to encounter this on several occasions. We had an example of the arbitrary action of a regular Chairman of Committees in 1882, when he suspended 30 Irish Members, many of whom, it was proved, had not been in the House during that Sitting, and many others had taken no part in the debate whatever during the Sitting. We had a large number of Irish Members suspended from the service of the House by the Chairman of Committees under a Rule which provided that Members could only be suspended for habitual abuse of the Forms of the House, and unduly prolonging discussion. Manifestly those who had not been in the House, or who had taken no part in the debate, or had not made any Motion, could not be said to be abusing the Forms of the House. When this action of the Chairman was challenged, especially by the Tory Party, the Rule as to the suspension of Members had to be materially altered, so as to prevent anything of the kind occurring again. Now, I invite the House to agree with me that, as this unfair action has been taken in times past by a regular Chairman of Committees under another Rule, so there is no reason why equally unfair action, the power to use which is very much wider and more open in the case of the present Rule than it was in the case of the Suspension Rule to which I have just referred, should not be taken again, and that, therefore, we should provide against it while there is yet

time. I submit there should be some precise words put into this Resolution, providing that the Chairman of Committees shall be prevented from taking this unfair action, if he be inclined to do so. Unless you adopt some check or safeguard of this kind, you will have no security that the Members of the minority will be able to exercise the legitimate, useful, and time-honoured effect upon the ultimate shape of Bills and Resolutions in this House which the minority have always exercised. While upon this point, I must ask the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House for some more explicit assurances than he has yet given us, as to whether, when this Rule is passed, he intends to propose that it shall be a Standing Order of the House? Is it the intention of the right hon. Gentleman, after the House has finished the consideration of this Rule, or after the House has finished the consideration of as many of these Rules as the House may decide to consider, to ask the House to resolve that as many of the Rules as shall have been considered shall be converted into Standing Orders? How does that question bear upon my present proposition? My present proposition is for further and special safeguards, more particularly in view of what we know the Government intend shortly to propose. I wish to point out that, if it be not the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to make this Rule a Standing Order, or any Rule that the House shall have considered, a Standing Order, I shall have an unanswerable claim on Liberal Members above and below the Gangway, not only to support this Amendment, but other Amendments which either I or my hon. Friends may move with the object of limiting the character of this Rule; because it will then be plain to Liberal Members that the Government have no wish that the useful weapon of the closure shall, in future, be capable of being put into operation by the Liberal Party against them. It will be clear that this Closure Rule question is simply brought forward for the purpose of putting down Irish debate on the Irish Coercion Bill. I beg, Mr. Speaker, to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the first word "When," in line 5, to the word "Chair," in line 9, both inclusive.—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question proposed,

"I hat the words 'When the Motion 'That the Question be now put' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made,' stand part of the Question."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Sir, I can hardly complain of the continuous opposition of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) to the Rule as it is now proposed to the House. He is, no doubt, consistently hostile to the Rules of Procedure as they are proposed by the Government. He wishes to prevent them taking effect, to prevent them being efficient Rules for the conduct of the Business of the House as we conceive it to be our duty to conduct that Business. Therefore, he is perfectly consistent in endeavouring to make it impossible for us to press the Rules in the form in which we have submitted them. The hon. Member asks that we shall except from the operation of this Rule the Committee of Supply and the Committee stage of all Bills; in other words, he desires to except from the effect of the closure the Amendments which may follow upon the Question which may be immediately before the House. I wish to point out that if that course were adopted, if Amendments can be moved one after another, whether in Supply, or whether in Committee on a Bill, it would be perfectly hopeless to attempt to close debate, or to attempt to advance the Business of this House. It is obvious to anyone that, if the hon. Member himself, who is opposed to the course we are now pursuing, could move Amendment after Amendment without end and without check, and the closure was not to apply to those Amendments, or not to apply to a clause which was a subject of debate, all attempt at closing of the debate would be absolutely hopeless. The hon. Member asks me whether we have fulfilled the engagements I have made to the House to consider the question of the power of the Chair? I have fully considered the question, and I believe I have clothed the Chair with a power which will protect, in the very words the hon. Member used, the rights of the minority. The hon. Gentleman says that the minority may be pardoned if they distrust the Chair; but, Sir, they distrust the Minister who may have to move the application of the Rule. The

Chairman has an authority and power which he exercises, not for the protection alone of the minority, not in defiance of the Minister or of the Member who may move the closure, but in discharge of his duty to the House with reference to the question which may be before the House, or to the Amendments which may be on the Paper. It would be inconceivable that the Chair would permit the closure to be applied, and a clause to be put, on which there were vital and substantial Amendments. It is quite plain that the Chair will distinguish between Amendments which are vital and Amendments which are only conceived for the purpose of obstructing Business. I may observe that the hon. Member said that if a measure is proposed for the consideration of the House on the ground that it is necessary that the State shall be saved, and a Minister rises in his place, and says that it is necessary that the closure should be applied, and that debate should terminate, the House would at once accept, and the Chairman would at once accept, such a proposal. Well, if we ever come to a question in which a Minister, sustained by a great majority, can satisfy that great majority of the House that it is necessary to propose measures of an important character for the safety of the State, I believe that, with or without Rules of this kind, the House would accept the statement of the Minister as correct, and take his word accompanied, as it would be, by evidence, and the House would give any power that might be necessary. That, I think, disposes at once of that part of the hon. Gentleman's argument. What a Minister would do under such circumstances would be to make his case clear, and if he did, the House and the Chair would support his demand with such authority as was necessary. I have said already, in answer to the hon. Member, that I believe that the safeguards we propose are adequate safeguards, and that in proposing them, I have completely redeemed the engagement I made to the House. But the hon. Gentleman has said that the Chairman is not to be regarded with the same respect as the Speaker. I deny that that is the view of the House.

MR. PARNELL: I did not use those words at all. I did not say that the Chairman was not to be regarded with the same respect as the Speaker; but what

I did say was, that the Chairman was not in the same position as the Speaker. I simply spoke of the nature of the offices of the two Gentlemen.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I took down the words of the hon. Gentleman, besides which, I remember distinctly that he said, "the Chairman was an intensely Party man," and I am sure that those words would convey the impression to the House and to the country that the decisions of the Chairman are not entitled to the same respect which always accompanies your decisions, Mr. Speaker. I have sat for many years in this House; and, although I admit, out of the House, the Chairman may belong to one Party or another, as I have no doubt you, Sir, out of the House, belong to one Party or another, my conviction, and I believe that of hon. Gentlemen of both sides of the House, is that the conduct of the Chairmen of Committees of whom we have had experience has always been that of men who were absolutely impartial, and who discharged the duties to the satisfaction of the House and of the country. My experience is, that the Chairman may, very fitly and very properly, be entrusted with the power with which we now seek to clothe him. I believe that the Chairman, in the exercise of his power, will not only protect the interests of the minority of the House itself, but will maintain the dignity and order of the House. I do not believe that the additional responsibility which is now cast upon him will, in the least degree, affect the propriety of his conduct. The hon. Member has asked me whether it is my intention to make these Rules Standing Orders. I wish it to be understood that so soon as the Rules which we desire to pass, and which we believe must be passed, shall have been passed, I will take the earliest opportunity in my power of having them made Standing Orders of the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Why not put such a Motion on the Paper?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not desirable or necessary that I should do so. I do not propose that when this particular Rule is passed that it shall be instantly made a Standing Order, because it would be obviously undesirable that we should make a Motion with regard to each particular Rule.

Mr. Parnell

MR. PARNELL: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to finish Procedure definitely before going on to any other Business?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I cannot undertake to do that; but I say, distinctly, that before we leave the question of the New Rules, the House will be invited to make them Standing Orders. I cannot undertake to say that, before we proceed to any other Business, the House will be invited to make them Standing Orders. I wish to be clear and distinct with the hon. Member. Times and seasons must be taken into account, and it may be necessary to interpose urgent Business before the whole of the Procedure Rules are passed, and in that case, it will not be my duty, nor is it my intention, to ask the House to make those Rules, which may have already been passed, Standing Orders. But before we have parted with the Rules, I intend to ask the House to make them Standing Orders. As to the question of casual Chairman, it is the intention of the Government to restrict the powers intended to be given under this Rule to the Chairman of Ways and Means.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House praised the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) for his consistency in opposing these Rules. It is rather singular that the right hon. Gentleman should do that, considering that these Rules are identical with those proposed in 1882, which he (Mr. W. H. Smith) and his Party vigorously opposed. What my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) has asked to-night is whether the Government intend to make these Rules Standing Orders of the House. The right hon. Gentleman has replied—"Yes; when these Rules have been passed, I shall make a Motion that they become Standing Orders of the House." When pressed, the right hon. Gentleman admitted that if other Business intervened before all the Rules had been passed, he would not make the Motion. The effect of such a course would be that the Rules will remain Sessional Orders only. The meaning is clear to us. An Irish Coercion Bill is to be introduced. This First Rule will become a Sessional Order, and, under it, anything like free discussion upon

the Coercion Bill will be stopped. When the Government have passed their Coercion Bill, they will allow the Clôture Rule to lapse, and thus prevent its being subsequently used against themselves. I was glad to get this acknowledgment from the right hon. Gentleman; because it clears the air, and lets us see exactly what the aim of this Rule is. Then, again, the remarks made by my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) regarding the action of the Chair, especially of the Chairman of Committees, has not, in the least degree, been answered by the Leader of the House. Let us consider what is the power given under this Rule. If an Amendment to a clause of a Bill is proposed in Committee, and if dilatory arguments are advanced in support of it, it is left to the Chair, upon being appealed to by any Member, to clôtüre all the following Amendments to the clause.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must call the attention of the House to the fact that we are not now discussing the whole of the paragraph, but only the part from the word "when," in line 5, to the word "Chair," in line 9. The hon. Gentleman is now going into matter which refers to the second portion of the paragraph, with which we are not now dealing.

MR. MOLLOY: I am sorry if I have misunderstood the Amendment; but I can advance the arguments I desire to address to the House upon the second portion of the paragraph.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) said it is inconceivable that the Chair will permit the closure to be applied to a clause in regard to which vital Amendments stand on the Paper; and, in the opening part of his remarks, he said the conduct of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) was perfectly consistent, inasmuch as his desire—and the desire of his followers—is to prevent the working of this Rule altogether, and to frustrate the object of the Government in getting the Rule passed. That depends altogether upon what the object of the Government is. If the object of the Government is to further the Business of the House, and the legislation of the country, we certainly have no desire to oppose the Rule; but if their object is to rush through the House a Coercion Act for Ireland by the aid of the Rule,

we certainly do desire to oppose it with all the power we have got. Then he said it would be manifestly absurd to make any limitation to meet the objections of the hon. Member for Cork, and added—"I think I have clothed the Chair with full power to protect the rights of the minority." He used the word "the," if he had said "a" I should have liked it better, because it would have looked that he wished to deal more fairly with the House. "The minority" conveys a very unfavourable impression to my mind. I did not like, moreover, the manner of the right hon. Gentleman when he spoke of the support which would be accorded to the Minister in introducing any Bill which that Minister thought necessary for the safety of the State; because I know that if a Minister with a majority behind him makes an appeal for the application of the clôtüre upon any Irish question he is certain to find his appeal responded to. Now, this Amendment chiefly refers to proceedings in Committee of Supply. Under the Rule, as it now stands, there is absolutely no check upon a desire which may be evinced by hon. Members to take Votes with a rush, except the discretion of the Chairman. It is open for a Minister to take Vote after Vote, without allowing any discussion at all. We are asked to trust to the protection of the Chairman of Committees. I am bound to confess that our experience teaches us to distrust Chairmen of Committees in times of excitement, when passions are aroused, as they undoubtedly will be again, probably before Easter. I have, unfortunately, personal experience of what Chairmen of Committees will do. I remember coming down to the House one day and finding that I had been suspended at 9 o'clock in the morning, when I was asleep in bed. I was accused of obstructing the Business of the House; but as a matter of fact, I had not been in the House for 12 hours. The difficulty we labour under is that our position in this House is entirely different from the position of an English Party. The majority of the Members of the House are Englishmen, and the matters which we consider vital are to them exceedingly trifling and uninteresting. English Members regard all our business as a nuisance. No doubt, in times past, it has been a nuisance,

[*Ninth Night.*]

and it will be a nuisance for some time to come. It is our duty to struggle against a Rule which will inevitably lead to the suppression of the voice of Ireland in this House. We do not mean to have our voice suppressed; because we realize that it has only been by iteration, by wearisome and tiresome discussion, that we have succeeded in compelling attention in the House. If you had had, six years ago, the power to close our mouths, not one of the reforms we have obtained for Ireland would have been passed. If you had silenced us, it would have resulted in Fenianism, dynamite, or something else of the kind. ["Oh, oh!"] In saying that, I appeal to the history of Ireland. When I first came into this House, or took up Constitutional agitation, the difficulty was to get the people to come to the polls, because they saw no use in doing so. What we have done—whether you consider it an evil or not—is to win a hearing for Ireland. We have won the confidence of the Irish people in Parliamentary action, and we have won it by making ourselves a nuisance to you.

MR. SPEAKER: The remarks of the hon. Gentleman are not relevant to the Amendment before the House. That Amendment only relates to any further action in case the Motion for closure is carried.

MR. DILLON: The effect of the Rule is, that whenever the Committee of Supply get tired of discussing the details of the Estimates, it will be in the power of a Minister to rush all the remaining Estimates through Committee. What I wished to bring forward was that, whatever chance under this Rule English Estimates may have of being discussed, the Irish Estimates have no such chance at all; because, as a rule, they are wearisome to the majority of the House. I shall, therefore, support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell).

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The further one looks into these words the more extraordinary they appear to be. In the first part of the Resolution we have arranged that on certain conditions the Motion "That the Question be now put," may be made; but when the Rule proceeds further you find that a certain vagueness creeps into it, and it says that any further Motion may be made, under certain conditions, which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question

already proposed from the Chair. The original Question, which I will call X, has been proposed, Y is the first Amendment, and Z is an Amendment to that Amendment. Under the first part of the Rule, Z may be clotured and decided in the negative without debate. Two Questions will then remain which have been put from the Chair—namely, X and Y, and it will be competent then for any hon. Member to move that X be forthwith put from the Chair. That seems to me a most extraordinary method of getting rid of Y. We have already decided to leave the rights of every individual Member of the House to the majority, under certain circumstances; but now it seems to me—if my interpretation of the Rules is correct—that we have gone a little further and have put the rights of every individual Member completely at the mercy of any other Member who may choose to move a rather foolish Amendment. An hon. Member may move a sensible and reasonable Amendment, Y, some other hon. Member may choose to move Z—an untenable alteration in it—the House may cloture that untenable alteration, then power will be left with the House to get rid of the sensible and reasonable question and put a stop to discussion. It may be said that this kind of thing will not be permitted by the Chair; but we have got to deal with the Resolution as it will stand on the Orders of the House. I trust that the Amendment will be accepted, or that a limitation will be put on the words "any further Motion," and that we shall receive some interpretation of the words "any Question already proposed."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The point raised by the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr. Chance), although it may at first appear obscure, is in reality a very simple one, and a very important one, although I do not know that the illustration, X, Y, Z, that he gave, was the best it would have been possible to offer. The Rule we are discussing, with the Amendment moved to it and the sub-Amendment to that Amendment, gives, however, a good illustration of what our position will be. We had the original Question including all the words of the Resolution. To that an Amendment was moved by the First Lord of the Treasury. That might have been an adverse Amendment, and, as a

matter of course, in most cases an Amendment moved to a Question is an adverse Amendment. Well, to that Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury a number of sub-Amendments were moved, and if this Rule we are now discussing were in force it would be competent for any Member to rise and invite the *clôture* on one of those sub-Amendments. The *clôture* being put in force on that Amendment, there would remain the original Question of the Rule itself and the Amendment standing in the name of the First Lord of the Treasury himself—to say nothing of the other sub-Amendments. Now, as this Rule is worded, it would be competent for any Member then to move that the *clôture* be applied to the Amendment or to the Rule itself, because the words of the Rule are—

“Any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair,”

and it will be obvious that there are two Questions that have been proposed from the Chair. I imagine that the gentleman who drafted this Resolution did not realize the effect of the words he put into it. They will probably go a great deal farther than he contemplated, and, I take it, the Government will admit that they did not intend to propose what is involved in the Rule. I submit, therefore, that there is room for the amendment of the Rule in the way that it is proposed to amend it.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think two or three practical difficulties arise from the wording of this Resolution as it stands on the Paper. If there are three Questions before the House the *clôturing* of the third will enable the *clôture* to be at once put on either the first or the second, and what we wish to secure is that there shall be a separate *clôture* in each case. I think that is only reasonable. The Budget may be under discussion, and a Conservative Member may get up and propose the abolition of, say, the carriage tax, and speak at inordinate length upon the subject, and the Government may *clôture* him. Well, the result will be that very important proposals affecting the tea duty or the whisky tax may be shut out by that proceeding. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman

the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), who is no doubt a great authority on these questions of taxation, shakes his head; but, it seems to me that under this Rule, when the *clôture* is put on one question, all the other questions will fall to the ground. Suppose you wish to go to war, and for that purpose desire to increase the tea tax from 6*d.* to 1*s.* The Leader of the Opposition may wish to resist that increase, and will wish to go round to the different sections of the House to see what support he can get. That will take some time; and, in the meantime, some hon. Member, hostile to the Government, or to some small extent friendly to them—and there is every shade of friendliness to the Government now—may invite his friends and enemies to help him in resisting the Amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, and someone may move that the duty on tea shall not be interfered with unless the tax is taken off armorial bearings, or something of that sort. That Motion he and his Friends may discuss until the *clôture* is applied, and the effect of that *clôture* will be to stop not only that Motion, but the more weighty Amendment as well. In that way a Government might avoid the discussion of a subject which, if properly debated, might lead to their being turned out of Office, and the Leader of the Opposition might be prevented from speaking on the principal Question. You may say that the Leader of the Government in this House would sooner cut off his right hand than refuse the Opposition an opportunity of challenging the conduct of the Executive, and no doubt that would have been his feeling in the old days; but I do not know how soon the courtesies of Party warfare may not be forgotten, or how long this old Parliamentary etiquette will last under the *clôture*. I see hon. Members on the Front Bench opposite smiling at that; but that is my opinion. Some Amendments moved in the House are sometimes of much greater importance than others. Often the weight of an Amendment is not thoroughly appreciated by the House or by the outside public. There is no one to judge of their comparative importance, so that an Amendment which seems of no importance, but which, if the hon. Member who desires to move it could show to be of the utmost importance if he

[*Ninth Night.*]

were allowed to speak upon it, will be shut out by the application of the *clôture* upon another Amendment. There is no way to judge of the importance of an Amendment without bringing it before the House and then subjecting it to the test of the Press, and, finally, it need be, to the test of a General Election. If you pass the Rule in the form proposed by the Government, you will be shutting out the possibility, and I would even say the probability, of a certain number of questions being brought forward, and will be shutting out most important questions by *clôturing* minor debates. I look on all these Rules, but especially this one of the *clôture*, as having a general tendency to drive discussion on most subjects from the House of Commons to platforms outside. I look upon that as a very dangerous thing. I consider that the best possible way to deal with vital questions is to discuss them here, where there is likely to be less friction and less danger than outside. To my mind it would be much better for Parliament to make up its mind to sit another month every year than for the House of Commons to pass the *Clôture* Rule. I know it would be a terrible misfortune if any hon. Gentleman opposite had to sit here from the 12th of August to the 12th of September, because then he not only would lose the grouse shooting, but also some of the partridge shooting. But however much hon. Members may be inconvenienced, if you do not take that course, and adopt this Rule instead, you will run the risk of shutting out the discussion of important subjects in this House and the opening of other channels for their consideration. You will be stopping an outlet for the blowing off of steam, which must be blown off to relieve the pressure on the boiler. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not condescend to give my observations some consideration, I should be glad if he or the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) would say a few words as to the manner in which discussions on the Budget will be affected by this Closure Rule. The discussion of the Budget is very important, and is one of the Constitutional functions of hon. Members of this House. If it can be shown that this Rule would enable the Government to stop discussion on ques-

tions affecting taxation, it seems to me the Government should not insist upon carrying the Resolution in its present form. The Government say—"You may trust to us and to Mr. Speaker." I have no doubt that you may be trusted, Sir; but I am now alluding to future Speakers. At present, the only protests against the payment of money which hon. Members are not inclined to listen to are those protests with regard to Votes for the Royal Family. There has always been a howl to prevent discussion when hon. Members venture upon these courses with which the House generally does not sympathize. But Votes are proposed at critical periods—on the eve of a great war money is asked for, and with this Rule at their command the Government may feel themselves safe in proposing almost anything. In my opinion, it would be most unfortunate if, with a prospect of war before us, the Government were able to choke discussion in the House of Commons under cover of this Resolution. As I understand it, on the Budget and all questions of taxation we shall be incurring a great danger by passing this Rule in its present form, because by the *clôturing* a comparatively trivial matter you would be able to shut out very important questions; and although you might be very likely backed up by public opinion in London, you may afterwards find yourself in great danger amongst the constituencies.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I agree with a great deal which has been said by the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) who has just spoken, and I think that this feature of the *clôture* will very greatly endanger free debate in this House. It means that as soon as one part of a clause of a Bill has had the *clôture* applied to it the whole of the rest of the clause may be put from the Chair. There was a time in the drafting of our old Acts of Parliament when that process would have been innocent enough—when each clause represented in itself some particular vital enactment. But at the present time clauses are drawn in a different way. Clauses are now drawn in a number of sub-sections—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and learned Gentleman is now dealing with that part of the Resolution which refers to the consideration of a clause. The

hon. and learned Member will see that that subject is in the second portion of the paragraph, and is not included in the subject under consideration.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: I bow to your ruling, Sir; but I thought the argument I was using would apply to both proceedings. I will restrict myself to the first portion. I was suggesting that as clauses are now drawn they fall into half-a-dozen, or sometimes as many as a dozen or 20 various sub-sections, all hinging on the first part of the clause.

MR. SPEAKER: The Question before the House is to leave out the words—

“That the words ‘When the Motion, “That the Question be now put,” has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made.”

That is all which would be excluded by the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). The rest of the paragraph of the Resolution refers to “the clause” which is now the subject of the hon. and learned Gentleman’s argument.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: Then, Sir, I will reserve what I have to say until we come to the latter part of the Resolution.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George’s, Hanover Square): Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite have appealed to me to say a word or two upon this subject; but, as a matter of fact, I adverted to it in one of the earlier discussions upon this Rule. I pointed out that theoretically the power taken in this Rule is certainly very great. The point, therefore, is whether the advantages of adopting this Rule are greater than the difficulties in which the House is involved by defects of procedure. The hon. and gallant Member opposite (Colonel Nolan) addressed the House as if it were the desire of the Government or any section of the House to limit debate. It has been repeated over and over again, however, that neither the Government nor any section of the House wish to curtail legitimate debate. I am sure I express the feeling of the great majority in this House when I say that the best we expect from this Rule is that the knowledge of its existence may render it unnecessary ever to apply it. The hon. and gallant Member spoke of the courtesy of warfare. We should wish the courtesies of warfare not only to be

continued as they are at present, but we should like to recur to the old practices of warfare, under which discussion was possible in this House. With regard to the special point raised by the hon. and gallant Member, and others who have spoken, they seemed to me to make some confusion between what is permitted and what is possible; and they have spoken as if it were the necessary consequence of the Rule that important Amendments will be ruled out by previous unimportant Amendments. The construction of the Rule would make that possible, so far as these two lines are concerned, if they are not read in the light of the context—of what has gone before. Notwithstanding the opposition of hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, the interposition of the Chair has been secured. Those hon. Members voted against us in regard to giving the minority these safeguards; but, fortunately, in the interests of the minority, these safeguards were inserted in the Rule. You will have, both in the full House and in Committee, the security which has been already enacted—namely, that a Motion for closure cannot be put if it is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority—and all cases which have been suggested by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite would fall under one, or both, of these heads. If the majority acted as it is suggested they would act, their conduct would be an abuse of the Rules of the House, and an infringement of the rights of the minority; and unless, therefore, we assume that the Chair would disregard a distinct enactment of the House, we know that it would refuse its consent to any Motion of that kind. I apprehend that in all these most important questions of taxation, to which the hon. and gallant Member has referred, it would be perfectly out of the question that because some frivolous Amendment had been moved and disposed of in the discussion of a particular matter, therefore an important Amendment affecting the taxpayer should be burked, or that hon. Members who wish to speak on it should be silenced. I venture to think that such a thing is an impossibility, and could not occur. If it did, it would be an abuse of the Rules of the House, and a gross infringement of the rights of the

minority. The Rule is drawn up in its present form in order that some power may be reserved to deal with absolutely frivolous Amendments. I have pointed out the safeguards that exist against the abuse of this power by the majority; but we must also have some protection against the abuse of the Rules of the House by the minority. It was pointed out at an earlier stage of this debate that unless some precaution of this kind were taken the *clôture* in Committee of Supply would be absolutely nugatory, because an endless number of Amendments might be moved, and the application of the *clôture* might be necessitated in such frequency as to render it impossible to come to a conclusion on the really important points of the debate. We have taken, and the House has assented to our taking, every possible security that could be taken against undue use of the Rule. We have done that in the face of considerable opposition, because we do attach the greatest importance to free discussion, and to the protection of the rights of every portion of this House. I would, further, point out one circumstance which hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have not alluded to; and it is this, that this *clôture* cannot be applied unless there are 200 Members in the House, which, again, is a considerable protection, because it shows that the Rule cannot be applied except on important occasions, and when there is a general gathering of the House. I can only repeat that it would be entirely contrary to the views of Her Majesty's Government—and, I believe, entirely contrary to the wishes of the majority of the House—if any of these Rules should tend to limit the free right of debate on matters of importance, and on matters which interest the House generally. And, further than that, I am quite ready to admit to hon. Members from Ireland that it would be a disaster if, under these Rules, they should not be able to debate with perfect freedom, and at reasonable length, all those matters which are of interest to Ireland, and which may be less interesting to England. Every part of this House would regret that the voice of Ireland should be silenced. We are all anxious to hear the voice of Ireland; but we have regretted that that voice has occasionally spoken at such inordinate length, and

with such infinite repetition, that we have not been able to catch the kernel of the views expressed as well as we might have done if they had been presented to us in a more concentrated form. I have been challenged to say a word or two on this matter; and I hope I have dealt frankly with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, as well as with the bulk of this House. I should regret if, in answer to their challenge, I had said that which would tend to prolong the debate. If I have, it will not be an encouragement to us to meet in future the challenges which are held out from time to time in that quarter.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) in the observations he has just addressed to the House has shown a lamentable ignorance of his own Rule. He has said that the Rule will not do any mischief because, in the first place, it will only be applied when there is a large gathering of Members, the presence of 200 being necessary before it can be enforced. The right hon. Gentleman is sadly in error. It does not require 200 Members to be present to vote for the closure. It could be voted by much fewer than 200, even 100 Members.

MR. GOSCHEN: That implies the presence of a minority of less than 40, which is a thing not likely to arise, looking at the constitution of Parties in the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman has been referring to what will be likely to take place at about 2 o'clock in the morning, when there are only a small number of Irish Members present. He looks upon this as an unjust power, but says it is necessary to place it in the power of the Chair, in order to prevent the proposing of unnecessary Amendments. That shows further ignorance of the Rules of the House, because there is already resident in the Chair power to deal with that kind of obstruction. Having admitted the injustice of the Rule, he says there is some safeguard in committing the exercise of that injustice to the Chair, because, otherwise, you will have endless Amendments proposed. But I remind him that if frivolous Amendments are proposed, there is already in existence power to deal with them. A

Rule was passed years ago, in order to deal with persistent Obstruction—Standing Order No. 12. And how did that Standing Order operate? Why, in 1882, when many of my hon. Friends were at home and in bed, they were suspended under it. I was up all night on that occasion, and perhaps it was quite right to suspend me, but my hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary, now the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), and my hon. Friend the Member for Longford, now Member for Londonderry (Mr. Justin M'Carthy), who were at home in bed, were all suspended, showing that there was power in the Chair not only to silence Members but to abuse the Rules. It is not denied by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) that this is what may happen. You may have a Motion before the House—call it No. 1. To that there may be five Amendments. On the second of these the *clôture* may be moved and carried, and that operation will have an effect backwards, *clôturing* Nos. 3, 4, and 5, and an effect forwards, *clôturing* also the Main Question. Sir, a repeating rifle will be nothing to it. I put it to the House, is that a reasonable Rule for a body of sensible men to pass, especially when you consider that not only is there power resident in the Chair to prevent frivolous Amendments, but there is a surplus of power? I cannot conceive anything more absurd than the way this Rule will work. Under the Rules of urgency applied to Mr. Forster's Act it was possible for the Prime Minister to get up on the Tuesday and declare that on the Wednesday, if the Amendments were not disposed of at 3 o'clock, they should all be put and decided without debate; and then on the Wednesday if a Member happened to be speaking at 3 o'clock, the Speaker got up and decapitated him, and the Amendments at once went off like so many explosive crackers. But now you are adopting an even more absurd system. You propose, by lopping off a branch, to kill the tree—in the middle of a bunch of Amendments you stop one, and away go all the rest.

MR. GOSCHEN: It does not follow that if one Amendment is *clôtured* all

the rest will fall. That will only happen when the Motion is made "That the Original Question be now put," and then only if decided in the affirmative.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I say that it may happen, and in view of the impetuous character of some noble Lords in this House, I confidently predict that it will happen. Give these hon. Members an inch and they will take an ell. The example of the mover of the first *Clôture* Motion will be followed, and the Amendments will be cut down in succession. In this way, as I say, you will reduce debate in this House to an absurdity. Then, here is a point hon. Members above the Gangway do not appear to be aware of. At an early period of the evening the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury made a remarkable confession in answer to a Question addressed to him. It is said that important urgent Business may be interpolated in these Procedure Rules, and the right hon. Gentleman was asked when he proposed to make this *Clôture* Resolution a Standing Order of the House? He replied that he should make the proposal whenever the discussion of the Rules was resumed. So that the Resolution, when passed, will be a Sessional Order. It will drop at the end of the Session, a Liberal Government, when they come into power, will not renew it, and hon. Gentlemen opposite hope that it will disappear altogether. The right hon. Gentleman said distinctly that the Government would not make this Rule a Standing Order. It is to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) was not in his place when that admission was made, or some Member who sat on the Committee when the Rules were being passed. The *clôture* was fought in that Committee and passed on by the right hon. Member for Derby, in the belief that it would be necessary for the conduct of Business in this House; but now we have it confessed that if the present Rule is carried, the Government will go on with the Coercion Bill, and the rest of the Rules will be left over to the future. If the closure is to be passed at all, let it be passed *en permanence*, and not to prevent all opposition to the Coercion Bill. I submit that these Rules have been drafted with carelessness. The Rules of

1882 were carefully worded with regard to the power to be given to the Chairman of Ways and Means. A casual Chairman, by those Rules, was not to have the same power as was given to the Chairman of Ways and Means. It is clear that the House should not give this power of closing debate to the casual Chairman; and when we pressed that view on the First Lord of the Treasury, it will be remembered that he confessed that it was not intended that the casual Chairman should have this power, a fact which shows that the House would have made a great mistake if it had hurried forward this Rule and passed the whole of the Amendments in one night. When the Government make the admission that these Rules will work mischief, unless they are stringently guarded by the Chair, they concede our whole position. We say that whatever view is taken as between one English Party and another, you cannot take the same view of our questions as we ourselves take; and yet you say that the Speaker is to decide that the Motion for the closure is not an infringement of the rights of minorities, or an abuse of the Rules of the House. Under this Amendment, we shall have the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees applying their minds to all Amendments in a light which we do not share at all. Therefore, it is only reasonable that we should ask the House to say that no Amendment shall be *clôtured* or disposed of, unless under a system in which the *clôture* is applied to each particular Amendment.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): Sir, with regard to the raising of frivolous Amendments, which it is said that this Rule is intended to prevent, I think it has been shown that the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means have ample powers at present for dealing with such Amendments, and that they have at times exercised that prerogative. We maintain that the proposal of the Government would make it quite possible to prevent debate on a series of Amendments such as those now standing in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). It would be a great hardship on Members of this House to prevent them discussing reasonable and proper Amendments, such, for instance, as might be moved in Committee of Supply; but

under the Rule any Member of the House could move that the *clôture* should be applied to that Amendment. I think that the House has something to complain of in the manner in which the pledge made by the Leader of the House some time ago has been redeemed. When we have asked him to redeem that pledge, we have always been met with the statement that the Government are not anxious to curtail reasonable, but unreasonable, debate, and that it is not anxious in the least to interfere with the rights of minorities, or with the rights of individuals; but if the right hon. Gentleman is so anxious to safeguard the rights of minorities or individuals, it is reasonable that we should expect that he would find words in the English language to enable him to put his wishes into proper form. The right hon. Gentleman says that we may depend that the right of minorities will not be infringed; but, even by his own admission, theoretically, the Rule is capable of being used very much to the detriment of minorities. We gather that the first use which will be made of the Rule will be to apply it to a Coercion Bill, and it will, therefore, be proper for us to offer every opposition to the Rule in its present form. With regard to the position of the Chairman of Committees, we maintain that he is appointed to the office because he is a strong Party man. He takes part in debates, and we say he cannot, therefore, take up the same unbiassed position with regard to the closure as the Speaker of the House. The Government should look forward to times when we may not go on peacefully in this House. We know that when the House is in a good humour its Rules are not likely to be abused; but that when Parties become excited, that those Rules will very likely be used with sternness. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that, in framing these Rules, the Government should keep before their eyes what is likely to happen in times of excitement. For these reasons I urge upon the Government the acceptance of the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Sir, although I have not had the advantage of hearing the whole of the discussion which has taken place on this question, I have listened with attention to the speeches of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the

right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. I understood the latter right hon. Gentleman to say, quite distinctly, that these Rules would be made Standing Orders; but it has now been suggested by some hon. Members that this is not the determination of the Government. I ask, therefore, if it is the intention of the Government to make each Rule, as it passes, Standing Orders, because, if it is not, then I must say that we are entering upon a course of considerable danger in adopting the closure for a moment, and not permanently, for the regulation of our proceedings. I feel as much as any hon. Gentleman that during this Session, we, on this side, whether above the Gangway or below it, may find ourselves in decided minorities with regard to some great question, and especially some connected with Ireland; and I shall not be surprised if, in the course of those debates, the closure is frequently proposed by some Member opposite, and that the Speaker or Chairman of Committees does not stop it. But it is some consolation that the time may come when questions will arise which are not palatable to hon. Gentlemen opposite, and that we shall have the power then of putting this power in force. I wish, therefore, to make the position quite clear, and to put an end to the strong impression that these Rules are not at once, and as each passes, to be converted into Standing Orders. My second point is this—I can quite understand that it will be proper to apply the closure to a good many Amendments on a particular question, those Amendments being *ejusdem generis*, and being practically disposed of by the adoption of one Motion; but I want to know whether this Rule, as it stands, does not go a good deal farther, and, if so, I think the House would be sorry to see the extreme power exercised which apparently may be given to certain words in the Rule. Suppose a Motion is under discussion, and there are on the Paper several *bonâ fide* Amendments, would it be possible that the closure should be so applied that it will shut out altogether all these Amendments? If that is possible, I appeal strongly to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and to the whole House, as to whether it is not right to modify the Rule in this respect. Again, with respect to a Bill under consideration in Committee; suppose

there are several Amendments to a clause, and the first is under discussion, I say it would be most impolitic, if we were to establish such a system, that an Amendment to another part of the same clause would be shut out.

MR. SPEAKER: I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the subject of Committees is not included in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. CHILDERS: I obey your direction, Sir, and I will briefly restate the two points on which I desire to have an answer from Her Majesty's Government. First, I ask for a distinct declaration as to whether, when this Rule is passed, it will be at once converted into a Standing Order without waiting for the adoption of the other Rules; and, secondly, for an answer to the appeal I have made to the right hon. Gentleman to introduce words which will prevent genuine Amendments from being shut out by the operation of the closure, after the first Amendment to a Motion has been put.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Sir, I can only speak again by the indulgence of the House. I think it is rather inconvenient for the right hon. Gentleman to return to the House and ask questions, every one of which has been answered in the reply given to the speech of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I stated distinctly to that hon. Member that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government that the Rule now proposed should be made a Standing Order. I did not engage that this Rule by itself should be made a Standing Order. To make each Rule a Standing Order would subject the House in every case to a long debate, and possibly the Rule would be made a weapon for further obstruction; but I have undertaken in good faith to ask the House to make the Rules Standing Orders as soon as it is possible to do so. With regard to the second question of the right hon. Gentleman, I say distinctly that it is the intention of the Government to give the Chair complete authority under the Rule now proposed to exclude the Motion for closure as regard any subsequent substantial Amendment which remains to be considered. I think it impossible to define the matter more clearly. It must rest with the Chair to determine with regard to the Motion, whether it constitutes an abuse of the Rules of the House

or an infringement of the rights of minorities. I have no desire whatever that any Member of the House should be precluded from the discussion of questions; and I think that anyone who sought to prevent the discussion of a substantive question, or to close debate when, from all the experience we have had in this House, debate must be entertained, would be absolutely unfit for the position which I have the honour to occupy. On the other hand, Sir, it is impossible, if the regulation of the debate in this House by closure is to be exercised at all, to leave to hon. Members the right to discuss every Amendment which may be raised on a Vote in Supply at their own pleasure without the control and sanction of the Chair.

MR. L'ARNELL: Sir, I hope I shall be allowed to make an explanation in answer to the statement which the First Lord of the Treasury has just made. That statement does not free my mind from the apprehension which induced me, earlier in the evening, to ask the Question to which the right hon. Gentleman has adverted. The Question I asked was, whether it was the intention of the Government to move the House that these Rules, or such of them as may be passed, should be made Standing Orders after they have been passed, and before the Government proceeds to the consideration of other Business? The answer of the right hon. Gentleman was, that before the Government finally left the question of Procedure, it was their intention to move that such Rules as they considered it necessary to adopt should be made Standing Orders. But the right hon. Gentleman distinctly declined to pledge himself to refrain from interrupting the consideration of the Rules before the House after the First Rule has been passed, in the event of its being necessary to take up other urgent Business. Those were the words of the right hon. Gentleman, and they amount to this—that in the event of its being necessary to take up other urgent Business, after the passage of the First Rule the Government will take up the Business without making that Rule a Standing Order, with the intention of reverting, after the disposal of the other urgent Business, to the consideration of the remaining Rules. Well, Sir, I want to know if it is the intention of the Government, in the event of their thinking

it necessary to proceed with their measure for strengthening the Criminal Law in Ireland after the First Rule is passed, and before the subsequent Rules have been disposed of, to make the Rule a Standing Order or not? Because, if they proceed to their measure for strengthening the Criminal Law—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is taking considerable latitude in his remarks. No doubt, the First Lord of the Treasury will answer the question of the hon. Member.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Sir, the hon. Gentleman appeals to me to make this Rule a Standing Order. My reply is, that if, after the discussion of this Rule, and its adoption by the House as a Sessional Order, the House will accept it as a Standing Order without the delay attendant on debate, I will then move that it be made a Standing Order. I expressly guard myself against the delay which would take place from debate on the Motion that the Rule be made a Standing Order.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Sir, I think the answer we have had from the right hon. Gentleman is one which perfectly justifies hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway in their apparent impotency. It is clear that if the Sessional Order is to be used for the purpose of passing the so-called reforms in Irish Criminal Procedure, by the time those reforms are passed, considerable changes may have taken place in the situation of affairs; and it may not be any long time before we are able to see whether we have been wise or not in allowing the Rule to pass as a Sessional Order. I am bound to say that, if there is a distinct understanding that the Sessional Order shall be made a Standing Order at once, before we proceed to the discussion of the Coercion Bill for Ireland, I do not see that this is other than a tolerably reasonable proposal. Upon that ground, we, at all events, shall offer no opposition to it.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Sir, the Leader of the House says that he will move that this Rule be made a Standing Order, if the House agrees to its becoming one without debate. This means, practically, that he will not move that it be made a Standing Order unless the House gives that pledge. I want to know who can give that pledge? Any Member who chooses may afterwards

get up and say that he is not bound by the pledge. Practically, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman says that he will not move the Rule as a Standing Order; but that he will, as soon as it is passed as a Sessional Order, pass a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and that, when the Bill is passed, it will remain to be decided whether he will make the Rule a Standing Order or not.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman says he will make this a Standing Order if the House guarantees that it shall be done without debate. We are not masters of the House; and we cannot say that there shall be no discussion. Then the right hon. Gentleman said it was probable that he would drop the other Rules of Procedure the moment he has passed the First Rule.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon; I said nothing of the sort. I said that it was possible that urgent Business might arise, and that it might be necessary to proceed with that Business before the whole of the Rules were passed. I referred especially to other than the First Rule.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: After that explanation, hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite ought to be a little abashed at the interruptions in which they have indulged. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) has said that urgency may make it necessary for him to interpose other Business.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I said it may be necessary to suspend the consideration of the Rules before all the Rules are got through. I referred to other Rules than the First.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I do not say the right hon. Gentleman does not intend, some time or other, to proceed with the remaining Rules of Procedure. What I do say is, that the right hon. Gentleman contemplates the suspension of the consideration of some of the Rules of Procedure, on account of urgent Business that may arise. I venture to put my own interpretation upon these words. The right hon. Gentleman means to get his closure, and to use it in passing his Coercion Bill; and, when he has done that, we will never hear another word about any Rule of Procedure. I maintain that the right hon. Gentleman has been trifling with the House and the country, when he puts on the Table of the House a whole array of Rules of Procedure——

MR. SPEAKER: We are not now discussing the whole Rules of Procedure, and I must say the discussion on the incidental point has lasted long enough.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: After that warning from you, Mr. Speaker, to which I most gladly and willingly attend, I will proceed to the discussion of the Main Question, having said sufficient on the incidental question to show exactly how the right hon. Gentleman stands with the House. Now, I maintain that this Rule, as it stands, is a most serious abridgment of the liberties of the House. ["Oh! oh!"] I really must ask to be protected from the noble Lord the Member for the Darwen Division of Lancashire (Viscount Cranborne), who is indulging in very unseemly interruptions. Now, we have here the words "the Chair." The Chair may mean the Speaker, the Chairman of Ways and Means, or the Gentleman who is put into the Chair for the time being. Suppose the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett) were put in the Chair——

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman cannot have been in the House when I spoke upon this Amendment, otherwise he must have known I distinctly stated that it is intended to confine this power to the Chairman of Ways and Means.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman will facilitate the discussion if he will find out what a person is going to say, before he rises to interrupt him. I have not said anything about what the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman are. We must look to the words of the Rules, and not to the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman; and my contention is, that by the Rule, as it stands, this power will be given to any casual Chairman. It may happen that the Government will, on some occasion, select as a casual Chairman so impartial a man as the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranborne). We have a right to demand that the Government will put in words that will save the House from this enormous and unprecedented interference with the liberties of the House. The right hon. Gentleman says we can trust the Chair. I will not mention names; but I have seen a Chairman of Committees carried away by the passion and clamour of the House.

[*Ninth Night.*]

Last Thursday night a number of Gentlemen came down at 12 o'clock and endeavoured to howl down everybody who rose from these Benches, just as they are now vainly endeavouring to howl me down. Suppose we have a repetition of these scenes. Suppose that some night, after 12 o'clock, one of the relays of the Tory Members come down to the House, and, filled with political enthusiasm or any other sort of enthusiasm, persist in crying "Agreed!" and "Divide!" and in indulging in manifestations of extreme Party and personal opposition. I can imagine a weak Chairman, or even a weak Speaker, being carried away by the tempest of opposition, and consenting to the getting rid of half-a-dozen Amendments to a large Vote in Supply, or to an important Bill before the House. I think that everybody who has any regard for the liberties of the House will strenuously and obstinately oppose this Rule.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 281; Noes 105: Majority 176.—(Div. List, No. 48.)

Amendment proposed,

In line 7, to leave out the words "the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained," in order to insert the words "the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

DR. CLARK (Caithness) rose, but Mr. Speaker was proceeding to put the Question, when—

MR. PARNELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to oppose the Amendment; but I understood the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) had caught your eye.

DR. CLARK: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(Dr. Clark.)

MR. SPEAKER: I consider that Motion an abuse of the Rules of the House, and I shall put the Question forthwith.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise to a point of Order. [*Cries of "Divide!"*]

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 94; Noes 292; Majority 198.—(Div. List, No. 49.)

Mr. T. P. O'Connor

DR. CLARK: Will you allow me, Sir, to make a personal explanation. I moved the adjournment of the debate as a protest against the course of conduct pursued by the Junior Lord of the Treasury (Sir Herbert Maxwell), in blocking Bills, and especially in blocking the Crofters' Act Amendment Bill. I thought that the course which this blocking Gentleman has been carrying on since the beginning of the Session was an abuse of the Forms of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I may say it was because I was aware that that was the intention of the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) in moving the adjournment of the debate that I thought the Motion was an abuse of the Rules of the House.

Original Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I should like to ask why the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) prefers the words he proposes to those already in the Rule? It seems to me there is no advantage to be gained by the substitution. At present the words of the Rule are, "the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained," and now the right hon. Gentleman suggests the words "the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld." The one set of words requires from the Speaker a positive act; the other set of words means that the Speaker must withhold something. I do not think that the Speaker will ever have to put this particular branch of the Rule into operation; it will be altogether in the hands of the Chairman of Committees. Under the Amendment, the Chairman may sit still, while the cloture is applied; whereas, according to the Rule in its original shape, what I may call an affirmative assent of the Presiding Officer will be required. Under these circumstances, the right hon. Gentleman would do better to allow the Rule to stand as originally proposed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The House has already decided that the assent of the Chair shall be a negative, rather than an affirmative consent. The proposed words are consequential upon the Amendment adopted earlier in the evening.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): It seems to me that the consent of the Chair is a matter of great importance. I do not know anybody in this House, not even the present occupier of the Chair, whose opinions on matters of this kind are more authoritative than those of the late Speaker Brand. In the year 1881, when the Business was declared urgent, and Mr. Speaker was invited to frame Rules for the despatch of Business, he included, amongst those he drew up for an admittedly exceptional and transitory state of things, one Rule which was headed "Putting the Question." It was provided—

"That when it appears to the Speaker to be the general sense of the House that the debate should close, then that proposition shall be put from the Chair and be decided in the affirmative only by a majority of 3 to 1."

Now, that is Speaker Brand's opinion of the position which the Speaker ought to occupy. Not only should the initiative rest with the Chair, but the action of the Speaker himself should be supported by a majority of at least three-fourths. The position of the Government is very different to the opinion of Speaker Brand. It seems to me a very reasonable and very moderate safeguard to ask for, that the consent of the Chair should have been formally and in set terms obtained previous to the Question being put. It is difficult to understand what is the object of the Government in attempting to limit these words, seeing that there is involved in the second portion of the Rule a summary closure of debate, such as has never been proposed in this House by any Committee—not by the Committee of 1848, of 1854, or of last Session, or by any Government that I have ever heard of. You will have such a closure of debate as will effectually silence men who have prepared themselves to speak upon a certain subject, and have been looking forward to an opportunity to address the House. These men may be especially qualified to debate a subject, but will be prevented from doing so, because other Members have incurred the displeasure of the House and have been *clôtured*. I do not see what the Government have gained by refusing to include these words in the Rule; these words—namely, that it is proposed to strike out.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I entirely dissent from the position of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, who holds that the words he proposes to insert are consequential. If he will look at the words of the Resolution as they originally stood, he will find that, according to the idea of the framer of the Rule, these words were not consequential. This is for a Motion separate and distinct from that for which the original consent was to be obtained. That first Motion we have disposed of, and I would strongly protest against the right hon. Gentleman attempting to make out that every fresh question that arises in the course of these debates has been already disposed of in previous debates. That is not showing the same fair play that he claimed for us, and for his own Party, in 1882, when the Tory Party occupied 17 nights in discussing a *Clôture* Resolution of not one-tenth part the stringency of the present Rule, and when they moved nearly 40 Amendments; whereas, up to the present moment, we have only moved some eight or nine. One Amendment which was moved in 1882, took three nights to discuss; whereas no Amendment that we have had before us in these debates has occupied more than a portion of a night. I protest, therefore, against the line the right hon. Gentleman has adopted on this and on other Amendments. I protest against his trying to shut us out from discussion in a way that he would not have allowed any political Party to do in 1882. Turn and twist this Amendment about as you like, and the more dangerous it looks, the more necessary it is to introduce some safeguard and regulation against abuse. The right hon. Gentleman does not propose to make it a Standing Order. He wants it for the passing of a Coercion Bill, and after that I suppose it will disappear with the Session. That is all very well. I can remember the *clôture* being passed in 1881, when the House agreed to Rules of urgency which provided a modified kind of *clôture*. I predicted then that the time would come when that incident would be taken advantage of by the Tory Party to pass a Rule for the application of the *clôture* pure and simple. That time has come; and now I predict again, that the time will come when this Rule will be used with fatal effect against the Tory Party by the Liberal Party.

[*Ninth Night.*]

Even if the Liberal Party has to propose it again as a Sessional Order, the Tory Party will be unable to maintain anything like a debate against it, after the language they have used in regard to it in the course of these discussions. I view the latter part of this Rule with the greatest alarm, as I believe it will be used as an engine of oppression against minorities, and that minorities will be unable to resist it. I believe it will do infinite harm and damage to freedom of debate in this House.

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I would even now ask my hon. Friends whether they could not cure the mischief that is apprehended as likely to arise from the operation of the *clôture* upon a series of Amendments, by acceding to the present proposal. I regret that the affirmative action of the Speaker in dealing with this *clôture* has been changed into a veto. I foresee that it will never be exercised, as hon. Members will be careful not to come within the definition of abusing the Forms of the House. But I stated the other night, in reference to this subject, when discussing the Rule as a whole, that I could scarcely believe the intention was that, after the *clôture* had been applied to the first of a series of Amendments, we should be enabled to pass by all the other Amendments, and then go at once to the general proposition. There are three occasions of importance on which that may be done. The first is in connection with a series of Amendments in Committee of Supply. We have already discussed that. The matter has been pressed, and no concession has been made by the Government. The second is the question raised by the hon. Member opposite just now—namely, a series of Amendments on going into Committee of Supply. That question will be presently raised by the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan), in an Amendment; and the third occasion, and the most important one, is a series of Amendments to a clause. I think it most extraordinary that a simple Motion of closure to one Amendment to a clause should enable us to pass by all the other Amendments, and come to the consideration of the Original Question. As I have stated, when the House is to rise at a fixed hour every night, there will be great pressure to use this *clôture* on

every occasion that the House meets. I should be satisfied if the Amendment which I have coming on presently, in regard to Amendments of which Notice has been given to clauses of a Bill, is adopted. If the Government were now minded to allow the assent of the Speaker to apply to these subsequent proceedings, so that the *clôture* will not operate so as to pass by Amendments without the consent of the Chair, I shall be content. I do not wish to delay the House, or to argue the question prematurely; but I think if the Government would refrain from opposing this Amendment, and would allow the consent of the Chair to be given to the operation of the *clôture* under these circumstances, it would remove some of the objections which have been raised in regard to proceedings in Committee of Supply.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I would join in the appeal made by the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down to the Government, to consider that the latter part of the Rule stands in a totally different position to the former part. It puts us in this position—that, at any moment, without notice, on any speech, any Member may rise and propose to *clôture* any clause. In the same way, with regard to the items of a Vote; when the discussion upon one of them is *clôtered*, it will be in the power of any Member to move to shut out discussion upon all the rest.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): The proper time to discuss the point raised by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Sclater-Booth) will be when we come to his Amendment. Therefore, I hope I shall be allowed to pass by his contention, and to state that we regard the question, so far as it refers to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork, as being already settled by the Vote the House has given. Our view is that, on all these occasions, the minority will find protection in the necessity for the Speaker's consent being given to a proposal for the application of the *clôture*. I am surprised at the hon. Member for Cork opposing the present Amendment, because he has one on the Paper to precisely the same effect.

MR. PARNELL: May I explain that I put my Amendment down before the exceedingly mischievous addition pro-

posed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House appeared on the Paper? I proposed to leave the Rule without any restriction at all, under the belief that it would be a Rule equally fair to all Parties; but I have always opposed the restriction introduced into the Rule by the right hon. Gentleman, as being calculated only to serve his own Party, and to be of no use to us.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I must take exception to the statement of the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Manners), that we have already decided the question under consideration. We have only decided that part of the Rule which enables the *clôture* to be applied to one set of proceedings, and we have now come to deal with that part of the proposal which relates to a totally different set of proceedings. It seems to me that the proposal of the Government will be calculated to make hon. Members who have been successful in one Motion to apply the *clôture* push their victory to an illegitimate degree, especially when we remember that these proceedings will take place amidst considerable heat. I think, when it is a question of putting a stop to all subsequent discussion after the closure has been once adopted, the Chair ought to be put in a position of greater responsibility and power than the right hon. Gentleman proposes.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I think we should have a guarantee that the Speaker's intervention shall be well considered, and shall not be taken hastily. If the consent of the Speaker is to be previously obtained, time will be given to him to consider the matter, and to make up his mind whether intervention is called for or not. The danger at present is that he may be led into giving a decision which may be suspected of partiality. If the intervention of the Speaker is to be justified at all, it should be justified by impartiality and by the fact that we shall never get an unconsidered and hasty decision from him.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I observe that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) is giving little or no consideration to the representations made on this subject from these Benches. Surely, we may claim to lay our voice before the House, and to give

to the Government any suggestions which we believe could be adopted with the greatest advantages. I must confess that I think, when an Amendment like this is under discussion, it is very strange that there are not some of the Conservative Members ready to follow the course of the right hon. Member (Mr. Slater-Booth), in view of the grave dangers which are run by passing the Rule in a hurry and in passion. I maintain that I have correctly and accurately described the situation when I say that these Rules are being passed in a hurry and in passion, and that hon. Gentlemen opposite, in their design and wish to get a fleeting triumph over hon. Members on this side of the House, are forgetful of the dangers, which may be incurred against the liberties of the House of Commons and by the Members of the Tory Party. I have very carefully read these Rules over and over again, and I must admit that the more I read them the more I feel convinced that the Rules are drawn out in a manner so clumsy, and the language is left so unguarded, as to lead to every kind of abuse of the liberty of speech. I hope that the greatest attention will be paid to the important appeal made by the right hon. Member (Mr. Slater-Booth) to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, that the Government should seriously take into consideration some words that would prevent those great abuses of *clôture* by which the *clôturing* of one Amendment—the consent of the Chair having previously been obtained—would have the effect of *clôturing* every other Amendment on the Paper. We have already decided the question with regard to Votes in Committee of Supply; and, while I do not wish in the least to anticipate the discussion which will arise on this matter later on, I would suggest to the Government that what they ought to do is to announce to Members what is the principle of action on which they intend to proceed, in order that the course of Members may be clearer than it is at present. We ought to know, before we pass anything further, whether the Government will insist that the consent of the Chair, or rather the veto of the Chair, shall be rendered absolutely necessary with regard to each successive Amendment

proposed to the House. I will recall to the recollection of the House the fact that when we have had Rules of Urgency passed, there was a very heated, vehement, and prolonged resistance; and this is what occurred in the case of the Coercion Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). By these Urgency Rules it was possible to have all the Amendments upon the Paper taken at a certain hour in the evening; but then they were passed in circumstances which bore no parallel to the circumstances in which we are now, for the House of Commons was in a state of almost revolutionary fever. I call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to the fact that, even in these Rules of Urgency to which I have referred, although no debate was allowed on the successive Amendments, each had to be divided upon. I candidly acknowledge, however, that that course led to some inconvenience, and yet I recognize the importance of the fact that we could have the Amendments divided upon. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will give us, even in this Rule, the same safeguard that we had in the Rules of Urgency which I have mentioned. It appears to me, I must confess, very strange that, considering the abuse and clumsiness clustering in and about the Rule, that the Tories should sit down without complaint, while their Leader is forging such shackles for them.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I think, Sir, that the debate has been mainly with reference to the consideration of the clauses of the Bill in Committee, whereas the Amendment refers entirely to the former part of the Rule, which considers whether the Speaker is in the Chair, the latter part referring to subsequent proceedings. I should like to put to my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) an illustration of the mode in which this Rule would work if the alteration he suggests were made in it. I think the House has now decided that the power of the Chair shall be by way of veto, and not by way of consent; and I am of opinion that it would be wrong to have two ways of enforcing the *clôture*. The only

time *clôture* was ever put in force was in a case to which this Rule exactly applies. The Question before the House was that the Orders of the Day and the Notices of Motion should be postponed until after the Motion in the name of the late Sir Stafford Northcote should be brought on. The Amendment was to insert the words "with the exception of" some other words in question. The Question was then put, "That those words should be inserted," and the House decided against it; but it would have been open to hon. Members to move that other Motions should be inserted, and inserted so as to completely nullify the putting the *clôture* in force. *Clôture*, without this clause being put in, I believe would not work at all. Yet while I quite reserve to myself the right to support the right hon. Member (Mr. Selater-Booth), I would like to point out that there is a radical distinction between the Speaker being in the Chair, and the House being in Committee, either in Supply or on the clauses of a Bill. I would very much hope that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would carefully consider the Amendment of the right hon. Member (Mr. Selater-Booth); because I believe that it would remove a great deal of objection to the latter part of the Rule, if we had a guarantee that there would be no interference with the *bonâ fide* discussion on any matter. I will support the Amendment, because I think, in that way, the closure may be made effective.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 67; Noes 267: Majority 200.—(Div. List, No. 50.)

Question proposed, "That the words, 'the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld,' be there inserted."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I quite admit that we are now past the first portion of the Rule; but I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to make a Proviso, declaring whether casual Chairmen would be able to exercise the powers which the Rule would confer. Under the circumstances of the case, I think the Government are bound to give some guarantee of their intentions by accepting the exclusion of casual Chairmen,

and providing that the word "Chair" should be removed and in its place inserted "Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I put down a Proviso of the character that is mentioned, and I will move it at a subsequent stage, the object of the Proviso being to restrict the powers of the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means. The words which I shall propose are as follows:—"Provided that, in this Rule, the word 'Chair' shall include only the Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means."

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury do not embody all that is necessary and satisfactory. What we want is that not only the casual Chairman, but that all the other officials shall be excluded. I do not wish the right hon. Gentleman to give us an undertaking just now, or make up his mind hastily; but will he consider this? I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman has examined this Rule so carefully and anxiously as we have, and we say that his words have exactly the opposite object to that at which we aim; his words are for the exclusion of two officials, not for the exclusion of anybody else. We want to proceed by exclusion, not by inclusion. To the legal mind the words may carry a special significance; but speaking as a layman, and not taking a merely legal view of them, I say the words do not effect our object. Under the circumstances, I will now propose the Amendment of which my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Healy) gave Notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be extremely inconvenient to introduce the proposed words here, after the word "Chair," for this reason—the word "Chair" occurs previously without the qualification of these words. It would be far better to move the addition of the words by way of Proviso.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): It seems to me that the words proposed by my right hon. Friend (Mr. W. H. Smith) will meet the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite by the addition of the word "only" at the end.

Mr. PARNELL: I think probably that would be sufficient; but what we propose to do now is to take a Division against inserting these words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. In doing so, we revert to the original position of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). We take our stand on the principle we have maintained all through since 1882, when Closure Rules came first before the attention of the House of Commons, that if there is to be a Rule of Closure it shall be equally applied to all Parties.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 244; Noes 78: Majority 166.—(Div. List, No. 51.)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I rise to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is not time for us to go home? Putting my question into the form of a Motion, I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(Mr. Dillwyn.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am very reluctant to put an early termination to the debate, in view of the amount of work we have got through. When we have done little work we should be prepared to sit a little longer. Seeing how little we have accomplished, I think a quarter-past 1 is an early hour. I think we might make a little more progress. We have had Divisions over and over again, and have arrived at a decision, and now that we have arrived at consequential Amendments, I think we might run rapidly through them, and adjourn at half-past 1.

Mr. STOREY (Sunderland): I should like to point out that the next Amendment we have to deal with can scarcely be called a consequential Amendment. I refer to the most important point raised by the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan). It cannot but give rise to a considerable amount of discussion of a technical kind, and, speaking for myself, and I may venture to do so for some other hon. Members, though the spirit may be wil-

[Ninth Night.]

ling, the flesh is weak. I have no intention of taking part in any tactics of obstruction, and I will support any Ministry in getting on with Business; but at 20 minutes past 1 in the morning we ought to be allowed to go home, especially when we remember that we have to be here again at midday, only 10½ hours hence. I do not appeal to the hot blood of the Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, but to the calm, good sense of the right hon. Gentleman, and beg him to listen to our appeal.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I can only speak again by the indulgence of the House, and merely wish to say that I do not think the discussion of the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway will occupy more than a few minutes. There is only one Motion to be put as an Amendment to going into Supply, and, consequently, there can be only one *clôture*, and it will be for the Chair to decide as to that Motion. This, by anticipation, I may say will be my answer to the Amendment.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Whether it is the prosperity, the success he has met with in his position, the progress he has made with his New Rule, or what it is I do not know; but the right hon. Gentleman is getting very exorbitant in his demands upon the House on behalf of his New Rule. Speaking seriously, the right hon. Gentleman must admit that no Minister in charge of a Closure Resolution has ever made the progress he has during the last few nights. On the first few lines of the Resolution our progress was slow; but since then important questions of principle have been decided, and, as the right hon. Gentleman must see, the work remaining before us is materially lessened. There is no object to be gained in spurring a willing steed overmuch. The right hon. Gentleman may congratulate himself on having got through a very important part of his Resolution; and in view of the fact that we are now opening up the few remaining important points, in which some of his own supporters are interested, it is desirable that we should approach the subject on a fresh day with our minds uncontaminated by the strife that a very late Sitting always begets. It is surprising how the right hon. Gentleman has succeeded in carrying the House with him and his Motion. If anyone had told me a few weeks ago

that after eight or nine nights' debate the House would have made such progress, I would not have believed him. I think, satisfied with his progress, the right hon. Gentleman might now allow us to go home.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I am sure no one can enjoy very much sitting here any longer at this time of night. The right hon. Gentleman has made a suggestion as to the Amendment standing next on the Paper, and I confess that the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) seems to me so much waste of paper; but I am not going to argue it now. The next Amendment, as it seems to me, can be easily shown to leave the Rule exactly where it is.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I really think we might be allowed now to adjourn; it is quite late enough.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is a little inconsistent that the right hon. Gentleman, who has among his Rules a proposition that the House should close its Sittings at half-past 12, should insist on having us sit here for any length of time. For those who live near the House, perhaps, it is not of much importance; but many of us live at a distance, and are put to considerable trouble and fatigue to get back here to-day at 12. We have made considerable progress to-night, though hon. Gentlemen who only entered the House since 9 o'clock could not judge of it. Those who have sat through these discussions know what a weary, fatiguing duty it is watching this Rule and the effect of Amendments. As a reasonable man—I am sure there is no more reasonable man than the right hon. Gentleman, or appearances are very much against him—I put it to him as a reasonable man, is it not better to adjourn before we get into a wrangle, have a Division, and waste our time? We are now in an equable condition of mind; but hon. Gentlemen opposite know what is the inevitable result of prolonging a contest on this point. We can now separate in good humour.

SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.): I simply rise to say I am extremely sorry to find the debate taking this conversational tone, and I would suggest that the House should address itself to Business.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 93; Noes 229: Majority 136.—(Div. List, No. 52.)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Sir, I take it that, after this Division, the Government will not persist in their demand to carry on the debate. I hope there will be no wrangle on this point, and I certainly have no intention of carrying on one; but I feel bound to point out that, as the House meets at 12 to-day, it is absolutely unreasonable to ask Members to come down here after only a few hours' rest. I, therefore, beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(Mr. Healy.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. and learned Gentleman appeals to me not to continue a wrangle on this point. I wish to say there has been no wrangling on this side of the House, and all we have done has been to protest against a waste of the time of this House. In the position I occupy, I endeavour to do the best in my power to conduct the Business of this House to the advantage of the country; but when proceedings are taken which involve wilful, intentional, and persistent delay—

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Mr. Speaker, I rise to Order. I wish to ask if any Member has a right to say that proceedings which have been taken by Members on this side of the House have involved wilful and persistent delay?

MR. SPEAKER: The expression "proceedings involving wilful and intentional delay" is not un-Parliamentary.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I believe the words I used are fully justified and probably gloried in by Members of this House. I protest, in the interests of this House and of the country, against what is being done; but I am not prepared to go on wasting the time of the House and the health and strength of the Members and officers without arriving at any satisfactory result. I know it is in the power of hon. Gentlemen

opposite, who number over 90, to prevent progress, and until the Rules are so altered as to place it out of their power, I recognize that fact and yield to their power, but not to their judgment; neither do I yield my own opinion. If the Motion for the adjournment of the House is withdrawn, I will move the Adjournment of the Debate.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): Sir, may I claim one word in reply to what has fallen from the First Lord of the Treasury. I acted with the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) as Teller in the last Division, and I repudiate, in the fullest manner, the imputation that either of us was actuated by a desire to waste the time of the House. [*Laughter.*] I am greeted with laughter by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, some of whom probably were not in the late Parliament; but, Sir, it does seem to me it comes with strange taste from Gentlemen sitting on the Front Government Bench to accuse us of wasting the time of the House. I do not happen to be green in this matter; but since I entered this House, I have never on any one occasion joined with any proceeding which could be decently charged as obstructive. But I have seen hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite take part in Obstruction on this very question of the *clôture*. In 1882, for 17 successive nights did I see right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite deliberately obstruct the Business of the House. I cannot accuse the First Lord of the Treasury of anything more than that he took advantage of the circumstances at the time, and if hon. Members from Ireland take advantage now of our natural objection to continue this debate to-night, in what do they differ from the First Lord of the Treasury? I think it is high time that this House should put the closure on the debate to-night. I hope we shall now go home, and I am not at all afraid of the construction the country will put on our action.

VISCOUNT LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): Mr. Speaker; I wish, with the permission of the House, to say a few words. I have been here since half-past 9, and from what I have seen I am confident the country will well understand the difficulties by which the Government are confronted in their endeavours to carry on the Business of the House. I hope that the Government will

[*Ninth Night.*]

take its stand to-night, and that my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury will say that he will not agree to the adjournment of the House, or of the debate, until we have reached that point in the Business for which he originally stipulated. For my part, I will support him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I think the noble Lord who has just spoken altogether misunderstood the situation. He does not seem to have heard what the First Lord of the Treasury said. But, Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am not prepared for the militant tone and frequent lectures indulged in by the right hon. Gentleman. Why should we be held chargeable with wasting time?

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise, Sir, to Order. I wish to ask if it is in Order for the noble Viscount the Member for Darwen (Viscount Cranborne) to be continually interrupting the hon. Gentleman who is speaking?

MR. SPEAKER: No interruptions by the noble Viscount or of any hon. Gentleman reached my ears, or I should certainly take notice of them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If the right hon. Gentleman had consented, without these comments, to move the adjournment of the debate, there would have been no necessity for the reply of the hon. Member for Sunderland. Why should I be chargeable with wishing to delay the Business of the House, because at half-past 1 the adjournment is moved? It was simply indecent for the right hon. Gentleman to make the charges he did as to the interruptions of the noble Viscount the Member for Darwen. I can only say he has youth on his side, and that renders his action tolerable. But we, in this House, believe there ought to be a limitation of the hours of labour of all people, and I do not see why Members of Parliament should be an exception to the rule. Why should we not go home till 2 o'clock, morning after morning, when it is held by the Government that it is necessary the debates should close at midnight. The Government are in possession of the whole of the time of the House; why should they work us like slaves? I wish to protest, in the most emphatic manner, against the tone of the right hon. Gentleman in charging hon. Mem-

bers with a deliberate intention to obstruct the Business of the House.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) has stated that I have youth on my side to make my conduct tolerable; I can only say, in reply, that he has not youth on his side, and his conduct is not tolerable.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. and learned Member for North Longford withdraws his Motion?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Yes, Sir. If hon. Members opposite had allowed me to open my mouth, I should have said so before.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Debate *adjourned* till To-morrow.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [7th March] *reported*.

Resolutions, 1 to 10 inclusive, *agreed to*.

Resolution 11 read a first and second time.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Mr. Speaker, we are going through this stage of Report, and I am not rising now to put back this Vote. But this I will say, there has been an allusion made already to-night from the Treasury Bench to the effect that Business is not going ahead. Now, I have been sitting here for the last 10 minutes, and I have heard thousands voted away without a single remark. I think the time has come to stop these Votes and not to proceed any further.

Resolution *agreed to*.

Remaining Resolution *agreed to*.

COUNTY COURTS [EXPENSES].

Resolution [7th March] *reported*.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Before that is agreed to, I should like to know how much money is involved?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Nothing. It is merely a question of putting the accounts in their right order.

Resolution *agreed to*.

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 9th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Leeds Suburban Railway.*
PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon)* [146]; Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment* [184].
Second Reading—*Referred to Select Committee*—Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment* [147]; Miners' Wages Payment* [140], *referred to Select Committee on the Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DUBLIN SOUTHERN DISTRICT TRAMWAYS BILL [REPAYMENT OF DEPOSIT].

Considered in Committee.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Perhaps the hon. Member in charge of the Bill will be good enough to explain the nature of the present proceeding. When the Bill was read a second time it contained a clause providing for the release of a certain deposit. I understand that all the rest of the Bill, except that clause, has been abandoned. If that is so, and this proceeding is merely incidental to the release of the deposit, I shall have no objection to make to the Bill.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I believe that is so.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize the repayment, subject to the provisions of section fourteen of "The Dublin Southern District Tramways Act, 1883," relating to compensation to landowners and other persons injured, and road authorities, and for protection of creditors, of the sum of One thousand one hundred and twenty-two pounds, twelve shillings, and sixpence, Consolidated Three Pounds per Centum Annuities, being the balance of the Deposit Fund in respect of the application for the said Act, and the interest or dividends thereon.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow*.

Q U E S T I O N .

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION).

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): As the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler) is reported to have stated on behalf of the Corporation last night at a banquet that—

VOL. CCCXI. [THIRD SERIES.]

"It was by no wish of theirs, but contrary to their wishes, that the investigation was deferred from Monday to next Thursday,"

I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether I postponed the Motion solely in consequence of a letter from himself stating that—

"In a matter of such grave importance to the parties charged, Mr. Smith thinks they should have somewhat more time to consider the course proposed and the representations they may wish to make upon it?"

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I did make that representation to the hon. Member opposite in the form he has stated to the House; but I did so without any communication from either of the parties. I felt that it was my duty, looking at the position I occupy in this House, to do so in fairness to the persons affected.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—RULE 1 (CLOSURE OF DEBATE).—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [TENTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Main Question, as amended,

"That, after a Question has been proposed, a Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part of, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate:

"Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members."—(Mr. William Henry Smith.)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

3 H [Tenth Night.]

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to move, in line 8, to leave out "any Question already," and insert "the Question last previously." The Amendment is a very simple one, and it may appear at first sight not to be of very particular importance; but, as a matter of fact, it does cover a very important point, and one well worthy of the consideration of the House before it decides to adopt any particular form of words. In order to appreciate the words of the Rule as it stands, it is necessary to bear in mind that every matter that is determined in this House is so determined by the form of the Question put from the Chair, which is resolved in the affirmative or negative. The Question must form a part of every proceeding in the House; and as the Business is very varied and multiform, and as Questions are very often complex, and as the possible Amendments to be moved upon those Questions are indefinite in number, and both as to matter and as to form, so the situations which arise in connection with Questions and the Amendments proposed are of almost infinite number, running through all sorts of combinations. Now, Sir, the forms of Questions which may arise are frequently divisible into three classes. First of all, to take the simplest case, there is the Question "That the Bill be now read a second time." Upon that a variety of Amendments may be moved. The usual form of Amendment is "That the Bill be read a second time on this day six months." But to that Amendment, again, another Amendment may be moved to substitute "three" months or "one month" for "six months." Of course, in that case you have three different Questions before the House. Now, according to the Rule as at present proposed, it would be possible to apply the *clôture* immediately to the last Amendment—namely, that which goes to substitute three months or one month for six months. On that being decided, the Main Question—namely, "That the Bill be now read a second time," could be put without any continuation of the debate on the original Amendment, "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months." But, besides that ordinary form of Amendment to the second reading of a Bill, it is perfectly competent for a Member to move a totally different form of Amendment.

For instance, if he desires to oppose the Bill on principle, it is open to him to move a Resolution that is antagonistic to the principle of the Bill, or to its policy or its main provisions; and on a great many interesting occasions, as will appear to anyone who takes the trouble to consult the Journals of the House, some of the most instructive and historic debates have been raised by such a form of Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill. Now, when such a Resolution has been proposed, it is open to any Member to move an Amendment to that Resolution, which itself is an Amendment. When that is done, according to the Rule as it at present stands, it will be competent for the Government which has previously arranged "the sense of the House," to force a Division decisive immediately of the proposed Amendment to the Resolution; and immediately after that, instead of having the Resolution itself adequately debated, though it may contain a very important proposition, not merely as to the matter of form, but also as to the matter of policy, to cause another Motion for closing the debate to be put, and so shelve a discussion on the principal Question. That is the way this Rule will work in the first class of cases—namely, that relating to the Second Reading of Bills. But with regard to another class of important questions—namely, "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair," you find precisely the same difficulty, because, on that occasion also, the Resolution of the first importance touching any one of a multitudinous array of questions of national importance may be raised and put from the Chair, and on that a further Amendment may be moved, and the operation of the Rule, as at present framed, will be the same as in the other case. The Amendment to the Resolution could be forced to an immediate Division, and the Resolution itself could be shelved, the Question, "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair," being immediately put to the House and carried by a previously-arranged majority. I do not know that this is likely to be done frequently. We all know that a weapon like this, though a very tempting one at a time when a feeling of impatience prevails, or at a time of Ministerial embarrassment, is still a very dangerous weapon to use, and one

which might occasionally be used at the risk of those who are handling it. Still, human nature is human nature, and it is possible to conceive that when a Government finds itself in a position of embarrassment—for instance, when it finds there is a deficiency of warlike stores that ought not to exist, or when there is some question of foreign policy before the country as to which they feel they have taken a very doubtful course—it will be natural for them to use every means that may be at their disposal for the purpose of closing the mouths of importunate adversaries. As to the Question, “That the Speaker do leave the Chair,” for the purpose of going into Committee of Ways and Means, the same difficulty presents itself. On these occasions some very important debates indeed have been originated in connection with Amendments moved by leading financiers; and if the power which it is now sought to place in the hands of the Government had existed in former years, I ask right hon. Gentlemen opposite whether, on more than one occasion, Ministers of the day would have been able to resist the temptation to use it? In the time of Mr. Pitt, and about the year 1853, there would have been many a strong temptation to the Government to close many and many a protracted debate. On questions relating to the taxation of the subject, I hold that it is exceedingly improper that the Administration should be allowed to make use of a weapon of this kind for closing debate in an Assembly which represents the taxpayers of the Kingdom. The third class of questions which may arise in this House—and a class peculiarly interesting to private Members—is that in which opinion on great subjects is brought to maturity by a Resolution. When a Member moves a Resolution, nothing is more common than for someone else to move an Amendment; and I do not think it would require a large amount of ingenuity on the part of an Administration, embarrassed by the line that a discussion has taken, to enable them to cause one of their Friends to start a minor Amendment for the purpose of manufacturing an apparent “sense of the House,” knowing that they will have an assured majority, and then, when a certain impatience has been generated by reason of the frivolous and unimportant Amendment, to start the

clôture on that Amendment, and with the momentum of that proceeding drive the Resolution itself to a Division. This ought to be a matter of grave concern to private Members, seeing that the Rule threatens their liberties in a particular way. The question of the Disestablishment of the Church was brought before the House in the form of a Resolution; and it is impossible to conceive that a Government could resist the temptation of burking such discussions if they had the power to do so. I maintain that, whichever way you look at this Rule, it is full of danger and mischief, and that the questions it raises are pregnant with importance as affecting liberty of discussion—of private Members especially—in this House.

Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the words “any Question already,” in order to insert the words “the Question last previously,”—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.”

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (*Mr. W. H. SMITH*) (Strand, Westminster): I had thought that the question raised by the hon. Member for East Donegal (*Mr. Arthur O'Connor*) had been substantially decided by the House. I certainly think the feeling of the House generally will be that the arguments he has with great ability put before us have already been considered and disposed of by a large majority. The hon. Gentleman's object is clearly to take from the clôture a large portion of the efficiency it is intended to attach to it, and to remove the discretion of the Chair—whether it be the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It does not affect the Speaker in any way.

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member addressed arguments to us which, no doubt, satisfy himself and those who act with him that it is desirable to retain the power of protracted debate, and of delaying the progress of measures, notwithstanding that the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees may think it fitting and expedient that the Question should be put, and may not consider it an abuse of the Rules of the House, nor an infringement of the privileges of the minority, for an hon. Member to move

that the Question should be put. I again say to the House that I cannot accede to any provision which will secure to the individual Members of the House the absolute privilege of proposing Amendments to Amendments, and interposing delay upon delay to the progress of Business if the closure is to be at all attempted. I rely—and I think the House will rely—upon the safeguard and protection which is afforded by the judicial supervision of the Chair over the exercise of the power to move the clôtüre, when it would be an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an interference with the privileges or a curtailment of the rights of minorities. It is impossible to conceive that the Chair will ever permit the Question to be put if a substantive Amendment inviting and requiring debate remains on the Paper; nor is it conceivable that any Minister should propose to the Chair that such a course should be taken. Between the two—the Chair and the Minister—the House has ample and sufficient safeguards against any abuse of the powers now sought to be conferred on them.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury as to the amplitude of the safeguards afforded by this Rule of Closure, seeing that we believe it to be directed against us Irish Members; that we know that as long as we remain here we shall always be in a minority; and that there will never be any great cordiality between us and any Government. I draw no sort of comfort, consolation, or hope from the probabilities stated by the right hon. Gentleman. With regard to the object of my hon. Friend's Amendment, it is in no way to limit the discretion of the Chair. My hon. Friend certainly desires to limit the frequency and succession of operations of the Clôtüre Rule; but the discretion of the Chair, under this Rule, differing in that respect from the Rule in existence, does not come into play until the Motion for the clôtüre has been made. The object of my hon. Friend is to limit the occasions on which such a Motion may be made; and it is obvious that if the Amendment were carried it would limit, not the discretion of the Chair, but the capability of hon. Members endeavouring to bring the power of the Chair into action. The right hon. Gentleman used a very

significant and formidable argument when he said that the Amendment would lessen the intended efficiency of the proposed closure. The Rule, as proposed, is simply an invitation to any Member of the majority to follow up the first application of the closure, so as at once to bring to an end the discussion on the Main Question. Between the old Clôtüre Rule and the one proposed there is the difference between the single bullet and the chain shot; because under the proposed Rule, when one Amendment has been clôtured, any further Question may be put which will give a decision on the Main Question. In this way the discussion on the Queen's Speech, which is a most weighty debate on the policy of the Government, can be brought at once to an end by the Government contriving to have an Amendment put down first, to have it discussed at excessive length, and then, when the House has been lashed into a condition of ferocity, to apply the clôtüre, and then immediately move that the original Question be put, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty," &c. What would then become of the other Amendments? The Rule will also act as a chain shot in the case of Votes in Committee of Supply. No matter how many items a Vote may contain, or how many sub-heads it may be divided into, there would be nothing easier than to procure a debate upon one of the first Amendments, and to bring about such a state of temper in the House as would prevent the discussion, or even the moving, of any subsequent Amendment. It is simply misleading the House to say that the attempt of my hon. Friend to limit the second paragraph of this Rule is an attempt to procure protraction of debate. The object of my hon. Friend is to procure the right of moving an Amendment; because, as the Rule stands in its present form, all the Amendments subsequent to the first on the Address in reply to the Royal Speech, or on the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, instead of standing on the broad, historic ground of the freedom of discussion of an individual Member of Parliament, will be placed at the mercy of the most petty and despicable contrivance of the camp followers of any Government. The views I have put before the House are, I submit, of sufficient importance to arrest

the attention of any hon. Member who has not given up his Parliamentary intelligence and public conscience to the keeping of the Government. Recent proceedings, however, are not encouraging, and lead me to think that the description of "items" sometimes applied to the Irish Party might be applied more accurately to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Unless some provision is introduced to save at least the right of moving an Amendment, no matter whether discussion be allowed or not, and to procure a vote of the House upon it, the result will be that, while this Assembly may still be called a House of Legislature, it will no longer deserve to be called a House of Parliament.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): The effect of adopting the second part of the Rule as proposed by the Government will be that many Questions will not be put from the Chair which, in the opinion of persons who desire to call attention to certain subjects, are of vital importance; and this is involved in language so extraordinary in its character that I venture to say that not 10 per cent of the House is aware of the effect of the Rule. There may be questions of vast importance to be discussed under the form of Amendments. Well, how is the Chair to know the comparative importance of these? The importance of a subject may turn on the technicality of a word, and such a subject may be of vital moment, although to those who are not conversant with it it may appear absolutely unimportant. What I object to is that no machinery whatever is provided by the Government for even a momentary discussion upon a subsequent Amendment, or for allowing a Member to rise to a point of Order, no matter how important and vital such subsequent Amendment or point of Order may be. I would ask whether, to raise the point, I should be in Order in moving to omit from the second paragraph the words which enable the Motion to be put "forthwith?"

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman would not be in Order in taking that course.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I wish to ask whether it is the intention of the Government to make any concession to the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) and the right hon. Member for the Basingstoke Divi-

sion of Hampshire (Mr. Sclater-Booth)? I certainly understood from the First Lord of the Treasury that the Government were prepared to make some concession in regard to the items of Supply; but I do not see any Amendments on the Paper carrying out the idea. The Rule as it stands is too severe, and if no concession is made I shall be bound to vote in support of the present Amendment. It would not be open to any hon. Member who has given Notice of Amendment on any item in Supply, or on a clause of a Bill, to raise a question with the Speaker whether the Motion was of sufficient public importance to justify him in moving it. Unless, therefore, the Government make some concession, I shall vote with the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton).

MR. W. H. SMITH: The right hon. Gentleman is mistaken in saying that the Government promised to make a concession with regard to the question of Supply. What I said was that I promised to consider the subject with a desire to meet the views of the House as far as I could. But I have not been able to arrive at any form of words, and no form of words have been suggested by any hon. Member on either side of the House which will prevent the raising of purely dilatory Motions for the purpose of Obstruction. I am, therefore, compelled to fall back on the responsibility, on the justice, and on the authority of the Speaker and of the Chairman of Committees. Full powers are possessed by both of these Judicial Officers of the House to secure the complete rights of every hon. Member, and full authority to secure the complete discussion of every question which is a substantive one before the House. I can do no more than this. I am aware that the question raised by the hon. Member for West Belfast is one of very great force; but if it is in the power of hon. Members to raise Amendments on every item of Supply, on every line and every word of a clause in a Bill going through Committee, then any attempt to put a limit to their discussion will altogether fail.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I cannot regard the answer which has been given as entirely satisfactory, nor can I think that this question has been adequately discussed. The question which has occurred to my mind

in listening to the debate is this—will it be possible, under this Rule, to exclude the adequate discussion of any question which has not been adequately discussed? I think that more attention ought to have been given by the Government to the point raised by the hon. Member for West Belfast, who showed that in debating the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne it will be perfectly possible to shut out half-a-dozen Amendments of the greatest possible importance. That appears to me to be a very strong course to take. Let us get rid of the Address if you choose; but the exclusion of Amendments in this way—for that is what it comes to—certainly seems to me to be a very strong proceeding. I should like to know what the objection to this Amendment is. The Government has the closure in a strong form; indeed, they could not have it in a more drastic form. By means of the closure, even with this Amendment, they could shut out the discussion of 100 Amendments successively; and I do not think the present Amendment would really impair its validity. Unless a better defence is set up by the Government for refusing the Amendment, I also shall feel bound to follow the hon. Member for West Belfast into the Lobby.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) has not thought fit to reply to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). The theory of the Government is that no majority in the House would ever abuse this Rule; but that is a pure assumption, and the assumption of the Irish Members is the directly opposite of that. We say that at certain times of excitement the House is ready to act with injustice to the Irish Party, and we are not without proof that this is not only possible, but probable. There are in the rank and file of the Tory Party Gentlemen perfectly competent to abuse the Rules of this House, and who would be quite ready to do it if occasion should arise. I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General, who used to be remarkable for his obstructive Motions—who earned for himself, in fact, the title of “the Eternal Raikes” from the frequency with which

his name appeared in the Division Lists in obstructive Divisions—to vouchsafe a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton). With regard to the paragraphs in the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I would point out that those relating to Ireland usually came near the end; and that, therefore, in order to prevent Amendments to them from being discussed, Tory Members, like the hon. Member for North Antrim and the hon. Member for Stockport, will put down Amendments to earlier portions. When those Amendments, in which the House may take very little interest, have been debated for 10 or 15 days, some other Member of the Tory Party will move the clôtüre, and in that way all the Amendments relating to Ireland will be incontinently shut out. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General ought to have a sympathetic interest in the efforts we are making to mitigate the stringency of this Rule.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Sir, I think the objection taken by the right hon. Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), on the ground of technicality, is of very great force. We are putting on the House something that may cause a great deal of technical inconvenience. The First Lord of the Treasury has, it appears to me, admitted the case against the Rule in some words which he let fall. He said—“Technically, the Rule may be of some inconvenience.” Well, we have already found ourselves in some difficulty as to the mode of discussing these very Rules. In a recent debate the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) stated that the House was bound by too many technicalities, and the Speaker said on that occasion that he was bound by the technicalities, and that if any difficulty was felt it must be cured by the House itself. I think this is a strong argument against adding any more technicalities to the Rules governing our Procedure. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has spoken of the equitable jurisdiction of the Chairman of Committees; but I do not think it is fair to lay on the Chair a jurisdiction of that kind. Certainly, unless I have some further explanation from the Government Bench on this subject, I

shall feel it my duty to vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor).

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Sir, we have it on very good authority that this Amendment does not impair the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury; and I think that the argument of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) has made it as clear to hon. Members generally, as it has to myself, that it will have the effect of strengthening it. I was very much struck with the illustration given by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast. We all know that the debates on the Address have been decisive of great matters of State and foreign policy. It was only last year that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) brought forward an Amendment on the Address, which altered the whole foreign and domestic policy of the country; and hon. Members will recollect that it was upon the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bordesley (Mr. Jesse Collings), who then sat for Ipswich, that the Government of the day were overthrown. I ask, then, if it is not quite possible, by the operation of this Rule in its present form, to put it entirely out of the power of the House to propose again Amendments which may have such tremendous effects? There is another way in which the Rule will stringently coerce and restrain the power of hon. Members in this House. If it be in the hands of the Speaker, or the Government, or any Member of this House, to close debate on important questions, and to shut out important Amendments, I contend that it would be a great loss, not only to hon. Members of the House, but to the country at large. If the Amendment of my hon. Friend be not adopted, it will be in the power of any tyrant majority in this House to prevent hon. Members from proposing such Amendments as will clear up any difficulties with regard to the comprehension of the Rule itself; and it will be out of the power of any hon. Member to propose any Amendment which would have the effect of strengthening the original proposals. I must, therefore, condemn the conduct of the Government in adhering stringently to the form of their proposals. I protest against the cavalier manner in which

they treat the feelings of hon. Members of this House; and I shall, for these reasons, support the Amendment of my hon. Friend, which has been conceived with the sagacity and foresight which characterizes the many Amendments which he has proposed in this House, and which ought, I think, to secure for him the confidence of the Chair and the respect of the Government.

MR. H. J. GILL (Limerick): Sir, I think that the Amendment of my hon. Friend should be supported almost more strenuously than any Amendment which has been brought forward to this Rule. In my opinion, Gentlemen from Wales and Scotland ought to give it their full support; for I say it is intended, or can be used, for the purpose of muzzling minorities. In the debate on the Address in reply to Her Majesty's Speech, it will become altogether a matter of chance as to which nationality will have the liberty of bringing forward a grievance. In Her Majesty's Speech allusion is often made to questions affecting the three countries; and, according to this Rule, the probability is that only the Representatives of the first Nationality alluded to will be able to bring their grievances before the House. The effect of this Rule, in its present form, will be that in a short time you will have Scotland and Wales getting up that strong agitation in favour of a native Parliament which has existed for so long in Ireland. I cannot see why the Government should not agree to some modification of this Rule, considering that this Amendment has been supported by influential Members on this side of the House above the Gangway, and especially since the right hon. Gentleman himself has admitted that it is open to abuse unless safeguarded in some way. For these reasons, I am strongly in favour of the Amendment before the House, which, I think, should carry with it the support of a large number of the Members of this House.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): Sir, after the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, I am of opinion that we ought not to allow this opportunity to pass without carrying out what I believe to be his intention, and enabling him to overcome the difficulty, which he says is recognized by himself and his Colleagues, in not being able to frame words which would

meet the objections that have been raised to this Rule by my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor). I think it is almost a humiliating admission on the part of the right hon. Gentleman and the Government, who have undertaken to manage the affairs of an Empire whose subjects number 300,000,000, that they are unable to put together words which will meet the object of this Amendment. In considering the necessity there is for the Amendment being carried, it has been absolutely necessary that we should look forward to the time when the whole of the debates in this House will be regulated by the Procedure Rules which we are discussing. When these Rules are passed, it will be found that a great many of them tend further to limit the powers and liberties of debate which private Members have at the present moment. Rule 9 contemplates and will abolish all opportunities that have been afforded for discussion on the Committee and Report stages of the Address. This, I think, is a further argument in favour of placing some limitation upon the power of closure as contained in the present Rule. Again, according to Rule 5, the time for debate on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays will be very seriously curtailed, inasmuch as it proposes on those days to close debate at midnight; and, in addition to that, there will be further power conferred on the Government of the day to move on those occasions, "That the Question be now put." That Rule, Sir, contracts, to a serious extent, the powers of discussion of private Members.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is discussing at some length Rules which are not yet before the House; and I point out that in doing so he is not in Order.

MR. LANE: I submit to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The object of the Amendment before the House is simply to prevent the Government having power to prevent discussion on all subsequent Amendments after the closure has been applied. The right hon. Gentleman says that he conceives it would be impossible for the powers given under this Rule to be put into operation in such a manner as would prevent Amendments of a substantial nature being put from the Chair. I cannot understand how the right hon.

Gentleman can say that this would be impossible, seeing that the Rule makes it compulsory on the occupant of the Chair to put the Question forthwith. It would be quite possible, by accepting this Amendment, to give a minority the power which the right hon. Gentleman says he is anxious to secure for it; and I think the Government should try, if possible, to see some means by which they can modify the wording of the Rule. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), who is recognized as a high authority on all questions of Procedure, will try to make up for the shortcomings admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury by adopting some phraseology that will allow Members to move important Amendments, which otherwise they would be prevented from moving.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): Sir, throughout these discussions the only consolation which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has given us is that we have the protection of the Chair to fall back upon. In my opinion, the interference of the Chair would be more beneficial under an arrangement different from that which is here proposed—that is to say, if the Chair were directly responsible for putting the closure in force, as is the case at present. I do not think the protection of the Chair would be nearly so effectual under the Rule we are considering as it is under the Rule now in existence. Although our proposal is a very reasonable one, it has been met with a complete refusal by the Government; and in that I think the Government is acting illogically and unreasonably, for they have themselves admitted the justice of the principle which it involves. The proposals of the Government are, perhaps, the most important that have come before this House, inasmuch as they involve the making of Rules which will determine the life or death of this Parliament. During the greater part of yesterday the Benches opposite were occupied—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not confining his remarks to the Amendment before the House.

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.): Sir, the position taken up by the Government is

most extraordinary, and one which, in my opinion, ought to be protested against by every Member of the House. They seem to assume that the entire wisdom of the House is concentrated on the Treasury Bench, and that no wise suggestion can proceed from this side of the House. Considering the enormous importance of this Rule, touching, as it does, the very life of Parliamentary debate, I think the fact that practically no single genuine Amendment has been entertained by the Government ought not to be lost sight of. Here is an Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman admits to be wise and reasonable; it is an Amendment which, when you have the Rules passed which will enable the Speaker to apply the closure without going to a Division, will enable you to do everything you propose to do, but will, at the same time, insure the preservation of certain liberties of debate which my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal contends for. Why, then, do not the Government accept the Amendment? It will not, in the slightest degree, impair the efficacy of the closure. The Government acknowledge that it is out of their power to draft an Amendment which will meet the point raised; and therefore I say that the only course open to them is to accept the Amendment of my hon. Friend. There is another assumption habitually made by the Government—namely, that there is some motive behind our Amendments; that we want by them simply to get opportunities for those who sit on these Benches to move dilatory Motions and prolong debate. But you have a most stringent Rule of Closure in existence already, and I remind the House that it has only once been put in force, and that it was only supported on the occasion I refer to by a very narrow majority. If the right hon. Gentleman were right in supposing that our whole object is simply to make weapons for obstructive purposes, having that Rule in your possession, I ask why it is that you have not used it? I say that the fact that the Rule has only been used once by the Speaker, and not at all by the Chairman of Committees, is a proof that the apprehensions of the right hon. Gentleman are unfounded; and for the reasons I have given I feel it my duty to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Sir, there are three points to which I ask the attention of the House. In the first place, I am very much struck by the frank and important admission of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury. I felt at the time it was strange that we could not discover a form of words which would meet the danger which the right hon. Gentleman admitted to exist; and I cannot now imagine that we are so bankrupt in language that this difficulty cannot be overcome. The main objection on which I shall support the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) is the fear that this Rule will be used to prevent discussion on the Expenditure of the country in Committee of Supply. What I have seen in this House has given me the impression that we are, above all things, in danger of losing control over the Expenditure of the country; and therefore I say that this danger is one which we ought most strongly to guard against.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Sir, I should like to know whether we shall be allowed to discuss the Amendments to a Bill in Committee?

MR. SPEAKER: The Question, "That the Clause be now put," would be open to amendment.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 170; Noes 109 : Majority 61.—(Div. List, No. 53.)

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Sir, I rise to Order. I wish to ask you whether the Motion in the name of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) is in Order? I venture to submit to you that the House has already decided the question which is raised by it, when at an earlier stage it negatived an Amendment to the effect that debate on going into Committee of Supply should be excepted from the operation of this Rule.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to point out an essential difference between my Amendment and that referred to in the case put by the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General, who, although he is of the greatest authority on matters in Committee, is not an equal authority on questions before the Whole House. My Amend-

[Tenth Night.]

ment affects a peculiar class of Motions—namely, those on going into Committee of Supply on Friday nights, on which no Division can be taken. I submit that it cannot be intended by this House to apply the closure to Motions on going into Committee of Supply.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Sir, the House has decided that the Motion, "That you do now leave the Chair," shall not be exempt from the Closure Rule. But I submit that the Amendment of my hon. and gallant Friend raises a different question—that is, that a Motion on going into Committee of Supply shall be exempt from the closure. There is, to my mind, a great difference between the closure on the original Question and the application of it to each and every Amendment in Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman is not in Order. The House has decided, on a Division, that the closure shall apply to the Question, on going into Committee of Supply, "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair." The situation will be this. First, an Amendment will be moved to the Question, "That I now leave the Chair;" on that Question I will suppose that the closure has been moved, and the Speaker's consent given. The Question then would be, "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair," as against the Amendment, and that Question would become the substantive Question before the House. That would not preclude discussion taking place on a subsequent Amendment, because it does not follow that a Member would make application to the Chair to apply the closure to any subsequent Amendment; it would not necessarily be shut out by the closure operating against the former Amendment. On a second Amendment a Member may say, "I ask your leave to apply the closure;" and the Speaker may withhold or give his consent. The hon. Member will be aware that at present, on the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair, if the first Amendment to that Question is negatived, no further Division can take place on another Amendment. It will be in the discretion of the Speaker to withhold or give his consent to further discussion being allowed; and on a night devoted to private Members it is not likely that the Chair would shut out a subsequent or any other Amendment from discussion.

Colonel Nolan

COLONEL NOLAN: Then I submit, Sir, that your ruling is equivalent to my Amendment being agreed to.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Sir, in the discussions on previous Amendments it has been shown that great inconvenience will ensue to private Members in respect of various departments of Business; and we now come to the consideration of another extremely important department of the Business of the House. I refer to the proceedings on Bills in Committee. I can hardly imagine that the Government seriously intend to carry into force the Resolution which is expressed in the words at the latter part of this Rule. It appears to me that from the moment when the Chairman of Committees calls out the number of a clause, the whole clause, and all the Amendments to it, come under the operation of this provision, and that it will be competent for any Member of the House to invite the Speaker to consider the Question, "That the Question be now put," and that the Question may be put with the Speaker's consent. Is it gravely intended that, after the closure has been applied to any Amendment on a clause, it may then be applied to the whole clause, so that all subsequent Amendments will be shut out? The former custom was to make a clause simple and complete; but we have of late years whole Bills in a single clause. We have had, with reference to Ireland, clauses of the most comprehensive character, that deserved the name of Bills rather than clauses; and these, again, have been divided and subdivided into sections and sub-sections. What will happen when such a clause is under consideration in Committee? In illustration of this, I may refer to the Irish Land Act of 1881, and the Crimes Act of 1882. A clause might deal with private inquiries, with the summoning of the inhabitants of a district, and with the attempted suppression of Boycotting through the infliction of imprisonment with hard labour by summary jurisdiction. It might be a most extensive and drastic clause, and, as such, there would, perhaps, be dozens of Amendments; and hon. Members here would not be doing their duty unless they applied to each sub-section and aspect of the clause such Amendments as their judgment dictated. Of course, if any two Amendments were identical, the second Amendment would be shut out; it follows that such Amend-

ments as are not shut out by the Chair are substantially different in their nature, and yet, by this Rule, they would all be shut out. I have, on the whole, observed that, like the scorpion, a clause carries its sting in its tail; and, therefore, the Amendments to the most important part of the clause would be shut out by the application of the closure, not only from debate, but even from the Constitutional right of their proposers to have them put from the Chair. It will be possible, I say, under this Rule, in time of excitement, to pass in a single Sitting, and in a single hour, a clause with reference to Ireland which amounts in substance to a Coercion Bill. The Government appear to apprehend that if this paragraph is allowed to stand in its present form hon. Members who are supposed to be desirous of obstructing the Business of the House will move, "That the Question be now put," for the purpose of wasting time. To that I reply that the Speaker has always had it in his power, upon the consideration of a clause on Amendment, to initiate such action as will bring the whole discussion to an end. Why is it that in the whole course of five years the Chairman of Committees has never been called upon to exercise this power? The Chair during that time has been occupied by three Gentlemen of great ability, and none of them have felt called upon to exercise the power of closure. I regard that as a proof that there has not been in that time a condition of things which has called for the exercise of the power. Nothing has occurred in the course of the last 12 months to make this provision necessary. It is not required by experience; it is a provision simply and solely to facilitate the passing of a Coercion Bill for Ireland through this House. I call upon the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) to accept this Amendment, or else to find words to meet the admitted evil. If he cannot find words, the first thing he ought to do is to resign his Office.

Amendment proposed, in line 9, to leave out, after the word "Chair," to the word "such," in line 11.—(Mr. Sexton.)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and also if a Clause be then under consideration' stand part of the Question."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am almost afraid I shall weary the House by the repetition in which I have been obliged to indulge during the last five weeks. I have repeatedly stated that there is no desire on the part of the Government to shut out substantial Amendments from consideration in Committee on a Bill. I have said repeatedly that neither you, Sir, nor the Chairman of Committees, could, under the Rule as it now stands, deprive the House of the power and the right of considering substantial Amendments to the clauses of a Bill. It would be an abuse of the Rules of the House if either of them were to permit such a closure to be imposed upon the House: it would be an abuse of the rights of the minority in the House. These words were introduced with the firm conviction that the power with which the Chair is clothed will be exercised for the protection of the rights of the House, and for the protection of Parliament itself, against any tyrannical use, on the part of the majority, of the power we now give them. I know no form of words which would better promote continued delay and obstruction than a form of words which would give the right to debate Amendment after Amendment to the clauses of a Bill. We rely with absolute confidence on the responsibility and the duty which is left to the Chair. We believe it would be impossible for the Chair to sanction a closure which would shut out debate upon substantial Amendments, and we believe the House would give fair and temperate consideration to all such Amendments. The hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) says that nothing has arisen in the past to justify the application to the House for additional Rules to regulate the Business of the House. If he and the hon. Gentlemen sitting around him are really of that opinion, I am sure they are the only people in the Empire who entertain that opinion. The absence of the power on the part of the House to conduct its Business satisfactorily, the inability and impotence of the House to control its own affairs, are patent to all the world, and Parliament is losing the influence and the power which it hitherto exercised in the country simply because it appears to be incapable of regulating its own affairs. No one

[Tenth Night.]

regrets more than I the necessity of asking the House to impose these restrictions; but I have solemnly come to the conviction that they are absolutely necessary.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) denies the statement of my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), that nothing has arisen to justify the extreme severity of these Rules, and he says that the House has become impotent. Speaking as one who thoroughly understands what the power of an obstructive section may be, I venture to confirm my hon. Friend's statement that there has been no real Obstruction since 1882, except that occasioned at times by the noble Lord the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) and his Friends. If there had been any intention to obstruct on the part of the Irish Members we should have obstructed in a manner which would have changed your views to a very large extent. You would have learnt then what Obstruction means. I may tell the right hon. Gentleman that the chief cause of Obstruction is the conduct of irresponsible Members below the Gangway opposite in giving vent to their feelings, howling and hooting across the House, as they did the other night, when English Members rise to support an Amendment. When hon. Members return at 11 o'clock at night from dinner, and indulge in most unseemly interruptions, I do not wonder that the temper of the House rises, and that hon. Members are inclined to prolong debate. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury said that neither the Speaker nor the Chairman would venture to stop discussion upon any substantial Amendments. But how can the Speaker or the Chairman say what are substantial Amendments until he has heard the arguments upon them? I fail to see how the Chair is to decide what the value or substantiality of an Amendment is until he has heard what can be said in regard to it. As a matter of fact, it will be in the power of a section of the House to introduce and discuss at length frivolous Amendments to the first lines of a clause, and in this way secure the adoption of the clôture in respect of the whole clause, to which there may be most important

Amendments — Amendments which a section of Members may really have desired to defeat by the course they had adopted. I do not object to the clôture if it is rightly enforced; but it is because I fear it will operate in the unjust manner I have described that I support this Amendment.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has said repeatedly that the Government have no desire to exclude substantial Amendments from the consideration of the House. I do not care what the desire of the Government is; what we have to deal with is what the effect of the Rule may be. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the effect of this Rule will be to exclude substantial Amendments from time to time, no matter who is in the Chair. An entirely new principle is set forth in this Rule. Under the present Standing Order, the Chairman is entitled to bring a debate to a close when he sees it is the evident sense of the House that the question has been adequately discussed. Now, the plain purpose of the framers of the existing Rule was that a Member of the House should at least be permitted to explain his Amendment before he was shut up entirely. This Rule, however, enacts that the Chairman of Committees shall inform himself of the importance, or the non-importance, of every Amendment which is put upon the Paper. Anyone who has taken part in the discussion of complicated Bills knows that a Chairman of Committees was never born who could do anything of the kind; therefore the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, that the Chairman will not exclude important Amendments, is one of the most absurd statements I ever heard. The Chairman of Ways and Means is already a very hard-worked man, and yet you propose to make it part of his duty to inform himself accurately of the importance or non-importance of every Amendment to every measure that is brought before the House, and to say, at a moment's notice, whether this or that Amendment may be discussed. It may frequently happen that the Chairman will sweep away Amendments which are really of vast importance; and, therefore, you will have the Chairman brought into the most unpleasant conflict with Mem-

bers of this House. What this Amendment asks is the right not to debate an Amendment, but to propose an Amendment, a right which ought never to be taken away, and which, if you do take away, you will, I make bold to say, soon have to restore. Now, I should like to know when it is supposed a clause is under consideration in Committee? Is it intended that a clause is under consideration when the Chairman calls the clause, or when he has called the first Amendment? The words of the Rule are, undoubtedly, very vague on this point. Although there are 670 Members of the House, there are not more than 50 Members present during the greater part of the discussions on these Rules. An overwhelming majority of Members vote upon the different Amendments in absolutely blank ignorance of what they are doing. What are we to suppose will be the condition of the minds of hon. Members when Amendments are proposed to the clauses of a Bill in which very likely hon. Members take no interest whatever? I naturally recur to an illustration of Irish Bills. Take a Bill like the Crimes Act. Look at the nature of the clauses of that Act. In one clause a Code of Criminal Law is laid down. Questions which have occupied the attention of reformers in this country for years were covered by that one clause; and had this Rule been in operation, such was the temper of the House at the time the clause was passed, that the Speaker or Chairman would have applied the *clôture* upon many important Amendments. There cannot be the slightest doubt that if a similar clause were proposed next week, and this Rule were passed in the meantime, the *clôture* would be applied without any attention being paid to argument and reason. The facilities which this Rule affords for passing laws quickly will unquestionably be availed of by Irish Ministers, if not by other Ministers. The Amendment of the Land Act, known as the Healy Clause, might have been *clôtured* by the Chairman under a Rule like this. What can the Chairman know of the condition of the Irish tenants? He is generally an Englishman, with no experience whatever of Ireland. Now, I do not think sufficient notice has been taken of the fact that under this Rule

the initiative is to be taken by a Member of the House, and not by the Speaker. The Member of the House will undoubtedly be the Leader of the House, and one knows that it is not an easy thing for the Speaker to snub the Leader of the House. It is absurd to say that the Speaker or Chairman will not be strongly influenced by the fact that the Leader of the House makes an appeal to the Chair to expedite Public Business. It is true there are men sometimes in the Chair who are sufficiently independent to stand neutral between the Leader of the House and the minority; but it is idle to contend that we can always trust to have in the Chair a man who will rise absolutely superior to all influence from a man in the position of Leader of this House. We know that the first object of this Rule is to push a Coercion Bill through the House. I put it to hon. Gentlemen whether they will not destroy their own Parliament, or injure it exceedingly, in trying to get such a Bill through by such means? It is our duty to oppose Bills which are disagreeable to our constituents as long as we can, and we shall do so. You will get your Coercion Bill, but you will leave your Parliament spoiled. The result, so far as Ireland goes, will be utterly worthless; but the results, so far as this Parliament is concerned, will be extremely mischievous. We are entitled to have some further explanation from the Members of the Treasury Bench as to the meaning they attach to this Rule. In the absence of further enlightenment, we shall be obliged to continue the discussion for some time longer.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Mr. Speaker, we want to know at what particular stage of the consideration of a Bill this Rule will apply. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has admitted that he is in a helpless condition; that he is unable to find words which will express clearly what he has in his mind. The right hon. Gentleman has Colleagues of great ingenuity and skill, and I believe some of them, if they set themselves to work, would be capable of finding words to express the view of the Government on this question. It is absolutely useless to hope that a Resolution of this kind, which is not clearly defined, which is ill-drawn, and which is open to a variety

of constructions, can be of anything like material help to the Business of the House.

MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I should like to ask the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) whether, in his opinion, under the Rule as now proposed by him it will be within the power and the duty of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees, in case a number of bogus Amendments are put down to a clause, and that these are followed by substantial Amendments, to put the clause down to the point where the substantial Amendments come in?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not for me to lay down an absolute Rule which is to guide the Speaker or Chairman of Committees; but I can say what I understand to be the meaning of this Rule. My view is, that no substantial Amendment of any kind will be shut out from consideration of the House by the operation of this Rule, but that what the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Rathbone) terms bogus Amendments will be just those which will be excluded. If to the first line of a clause there are Amendments which have no meaning, and which, perhaps, are only moved for the purpose of causing delay, it will be in the power of the Chair to sanction the *clôture* as regards those Amendments collectively. When a substantial Amendment is reached which the House desires to discuss, and which the House ought to discuss, I apprehend the Chair will undoubtedly afford an opportunity in the mode of putting the Question which will allow of full discussion.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) must be very simple if he regards as at all satisfactory the reply of the First Lord of the Treasury. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Rathbone) asked whether this Rule will be operative against bogus Amendments only, and the right hon. Gentleman replied that it is the intention of the Government and the intention of the Rule that bogus Amendments shall be operated against, but that substantial Amendments shall be protected. But the right hon. Gentleman did not go on to say who is to be the judge of the substantiality of the Amendments. I give every credit to the Gentleman who drew up this Rule; he must be a man of most ingenious

mind. It is suggested he is the Judge Advocate General (Mr. Marriott), but I think that right hon. Gentleman will be found of more advantage upon a Primrose League platform than in drawing up Rules of Procedure. It is as well we should consider the possible effect of this Rule. You are resting on the Chairman of Committees a burden he cannot bear. The infallibility of the Pope is nothing compared with the infallibility you require from the Chairman under this Rule. We have made the Speaker and Chairman judges of the Order of this Assembly; but the present proposal is to make them judges of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the propositions that are made. The present Chairman of Ways and Means is an admirable man, a man of the greatest abilities and talents; but he is a newspaper man, and not an agriculturist; and, therefore, how could he have decided upon the substantiality of the Amendment which was proposed to the Land Act by the hon. and learned Member for Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), an Amendment which was accepted, and which has been known since as the Healy Clause? If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) had been the Chairman of Ways and Means, he would have known the importance of the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend. With the eye of his bucolic imagination he would have seen that that innocent line proposed by my hon. and learned Friend had a most important bearing upon the relations of landlord and tenant, and I am sure he would have been willing to say to the Leader of the Government, especially if it had been a Tory Government—"This is not exactly a bogus Amendment; but I had better rule it a bogus Amendment, as the best way of getting rid of such a revolutionary and wide proposal." I am driven to the conclusion that the Tory Party are proposing this Rule so that they may wield it against the Party to which I belong; and, that being the case, I feel bound to give the Rule the most determined opposition.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I admit I should have the most bucolic and simple imagination in the world if I supposed that any answer given to any Question asked by hon. Members opposite could be satisfactory

to them unless it were an absolute concession of what they require. The real answer to the Question now put is that the matter is left to the discretion of the Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be. We are told that this measure is intended solely as a weapon against the Irish, and an hon. Member has not hesitated to say that the Government do not intend that this Rule shall have a permanent character. It is much too bad that such statements should be made after the Leader of the House has explicitly stated, over and over again, that his intention is to make this Rule a Standing Order, and not leave it a Sessional Order. It has also been said that this Rule will never be used against the Tory Party. I sincerely hope it will never be used against any Party in the House. The object and intention of this proposal is to regulate and control the conduct of the Business of the House; and this Rule is proposed by the Government, and supported by hon. Gentlemen, with no other object. I am bound to admit there is a great deal in the objections which hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have raised to this part of the Rule. Hon. Members have pointed out the possible dangers and difficulties which are incidental to the course we are asked to pursue. I acknowledge there may possibly be dangers and difficulties connected with this particular part of the proposal. Undoubtedly it is not difficult to urge grave objections against a proceeding which is altogether novel and unprecedented; but when I look round it is impossible to conceal from myself the fact that we are confronted with evils in every direction. Under such circumstances we must choose the least of the evils. We, on this side of the House, have come reluctantly—no one more reluctantly than myself—to the conclusion that some measure for the closure of debate has become absolutely necessary in the present and altered condition of the House of Commons, if any progress is to be made in future with the Business of the House. That point, I think hon. Members will admit, has been effectually decided by the House of Commons. We are to have some form of closure of debate, and the question now before us is whether, under certain circumstances, some Amendments may be suppressed. Hon. Members opposite

contend that the power given by this part of the Rule will be used unfairly in order to push Bills through the House. Such statements amount to a distinct charge and reflection upon either the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, and I know no reason whatsoever to justify statements of such a character. Then, it is said, this is an intolerable burden to throw upon the Chair. An hon. Gentleman remarked that it would be impossible for the Chairman to sufficiently study all the Amendments so as to say those which were proper to be entertained and those which were not. I do not see the force of that. The Chairman of Committees is always a Gentleman of the highest attainments and abilities, and it is not a matter of any great difficulty for any Gentleman to master the Amendments which are likely to come up for consideration in Committee during any one day. Undoubtedly this is not only something novel in our proceedings, but it is of a very strong order. We must, however, have something of this kind, or the whole of the proceedings with regard to the closure of debate will be rendered nugatory. We have supplied a very considerable safeguard already in giving to the Chairman the power of veto; but if that is not deemed by hon. Members sufficient to prevent the *clôture* being used as a weapon of Party tyranny, they should remember that we have still to decide upon the proportions by which the closure shall be carried. I have always held that the best safeguard we can have is in a proportional majority; and when that question comes up for decision I shall, with the intention of preserving to the fullest extent the rights of the minority, to which I attach the highest possible importance, vote for a proportional majority, and I think those who are not satisfied with the safeguards existing in the Rule would do well to follow that course.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There are one or two points raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) which require some slight notice. He says that the real answer to some of the objections urged by the Scotland Yard Division of Liverpool—[*Laughter.*] It is not unnatural, in view of the fact that we are considering the police regulations for the House, that I should have fallen

into such a blunder. The right hon. Gentleman said that the real answer to the objections raised by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) is that discretion is left to the Chair. But it is true that in times of political excitement charges of partiality have been made against Gentlemen occupying the Chair of this House, and the occupants of the Chair have had to defend themselves against such charges. We all hope that such a state of things is not likely to arise again. As it is admitted that what is now sought to be enacted is not only novel, but extreme in its possible application, one has to regard it with reference to the exceptional state of things in which it may be applied. I do feel that there is the difficulty that if this Rule be passed in the form now suggested, it may be possible in Supply to raise a question upon one unimportant item so as to prevent a discussion upon the whole Vote, or it may be possible to raise an obstructive discussion upon some unimportant Amendment to a clause so as to get rid of all the important Amendments. The exceptional state of things has arisen because, whilst the Irish Members confined themselves to what I may call the legitimate methods of Parliamentary discussion, their representations were treated with comparative contempt. Many subjects that have been attended to of late years were utterly disregarded when the great majority of the House felt that they could afford to disregard them. For the exceptional state of things which now exists—and for which some of us, and I do not mind including myself amongst the number, are inclined to blame hon. Members sitting around me—of the extension of debate to too great length the blame should rest with the great majority of the English, Scotch, and Welsh Members, who in years gone by passed by without notice the questions raised by the Irish Members. It is said that we are safe against having Amendments ruled out by the Chair as mere obstructive Amendments, because the Gentleman occupying the position of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker is always a person of considerable attainments and capable of forming a sound opinion as to the Amendments on the Paper. But I think it will be admitted that in a previous Parliament—in which, by the way, I did not take a very active part—there was

an occasion on which the Gentleman occupying the position of Chairman did, under circumstances of great difficulty and extreme pressure, and after sitting for a considerable number of hours, so far lose that coolness which usually characterized him in the execution of his functions—if the rumour which reached me in the part of the House I then occupied was correct—as to find himself in the Division Lobby, without knowing why he went there. That shows you that you should not be altogether in the hands of a Gentleman who has to sit here, sometimes for a long time, under circumstances which are calculated to try his temper and to warp his judgment. We ought not to put upon the Chairman of Committees the responsibility which this Rule involves, when a mistake in the exercise of it may be attended with most serious consequences to the legislation which has been set going in the House.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): These Rules are only of a temporary character perhaps; but we must bear in mind that the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees are human beings, like ourselves, and are capable of being swayed by the circumstances of the moment. The Speaker and the Chairman, being simply men, and sometimes Party men, where demonstrations of feeling take place, are very often likely to be influenced by it, without intending to do injustice to the minority. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury declares that if these words are not inserted the whole of the clause will be nugatory; but I desire to point out that the effect of the Rule will be not merely to prevent discussion on the Amendment, but to prevent the proposal of the Amendment. That is an important point; and I do not think it has been grappled with by right hon. Gentlemen opposite. The effect of the Rule would be to prevent the consideration of whole batches of Amendments. That would be a state of things which every hon. Member who has any respect for the proceedings of this House ought to resist. The right hon. Gentleman says it is impossible for any of the evils which we predict would result from the passing of this Rule in its present form to take place. That may be his belief; but my opinion, and that of my hon. Friends, is exactly the reverse. We

believe that, at certain times—and such a time may occur a week or two hence—the Government will not have any desire to allow reasonable discussion on our Amendments. We believe that the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees—and I say this without meaning any disrespect to these Gentlemen—will be carried away by the feeling of the House; and we, moreover, believe that the House itself will not allow us reasonable opportunity for discussing those Amendments which we consider essential. Before now, whole batches of Amendments have been ruled out of Order; and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that that sort of thing will occur again before very long, when the Coercion Bill is under consideration. We shall see then whether the House will be as just to us as the First Lord of the Treasury imagines. We Irish Members believe that this Rule is directed solely against us, and that it never can, or will, be used against a large minority in this House. I hope every one of my hon. Friends will resist the Rule to the utmost, believing it to be an attempt to cripple them. It has been said that there has been need for this Rule within the past two years; but I would ask, what Business has there been before the House? We cannot be said to have obstructed Business, because there had been no Business to obstruct; and even if there had been Business before the House, all we have done has been merely to discuss Irish questions. We were accused by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) of obstructing the Business of the House, but I do not believe intelligent Members of the Tory Party credit these charges. It seems to me like a piece of insolence on the part of a Gentleman like the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, who is himself utterly ignorant of the affairs of Ireland—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has applied the word “insolence” to a Member of this House. That is altogether an un-Parliamentary expression.

MR. CLANCY: Of course, I have not the least intention of persevering in the use of the word against your decision—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman will withdraw it.

MR. CLANCY: I withdraw the word as applied to the late Chief Secretary,

and apologize for having used it. But I say that it was most aggravating and offensive to have the charge continually dinned into our ears that we were obstructing the Business of the House. As soon as the Government bring forward any remedial measure calculated to go to the root of the difficulty in Ireland—a thing they have never yet tried to do, and a thing they do not seem inclined to do—they will find there is no need whatever for Rules of this description; and, if I might presume to give them advice, I would advise them to drop these Rules and proceed with some remedial measure at once.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I speak as an advocate of the closure, and not as in any way its enemy. I suppose we shall have to interpret the Rule by the text as it is written and laid before us, and not by the scholia put upon it by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury; and that being so, it appears to me that, if there should be on the Paper a number of dilatory Amendments and one substantial Amendment of great importance, it will not be in the power of the Chairman of Committees to put aside the dilatory Amendments in order to have the substantial Amendment discussed. Two courses only, as I understand it, will be open to him; either he will have to put all the dilatory Amendments one after another before he comes to the substantial Amendment, which is obviously an obstructive process, or he will have to give up the Amendments altogether, whether substantial or dilatory, and put the entire clause as it stands. Before giving a vote on the Question before the House, I hope some one of the Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench who are responsible for the framing of these Rules will say whether or not I have correctly stated the case.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I very much regret that no Gentleman on the Treasury Bench, and in particular no Gentleman responsible for this Rule, has offered any answer to the very reasonable observations made by the hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. H. Gardner); but it is merely of a piece with the attitude adopted by the Treasury Bench in the discussion of this Rule. For some reasons—I do not quite know what—the Treasury Bench has preferred an almost complete silence, at

least so far as reasonable explanation is concerned. I very much regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) should have thought that any observations were made by hon. Members below the Gangway on this side reflecting on the Chair. We desire that if the Government should, by a majority, obtain a vicious and dangerous weapon, that they should confine the use of it altogether to themselves, and that the Chair should not be dragged into the controversy, which will always be a heated and undesirable one. But the action of Her Majesty's Government has been directly in the opposite direction, and the position of the Chair is now that the Chair cannot possibly interpose unless the worst possible abuse of the Rules of the House has been committed in the proposal of the *clôture*. That is a position which will make the Chair very slow indeed to interfere. It is quite a new departure in this House that we should make the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees judge of the legislation which we are to pass. I have always imagined it to be the duty of the House itself to judge as to the reasonableness of Amendments or any other questions submitted to it. All that the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker is master of is the debate and the propriety of our mode of continuing it; but it is clear that by the Rule as proposed he will have power to prevent questions being submitted. There are two kinds of closure, the original and the consequential. But, while only one question will be decided by the original closure, the consequential may put an end to 20 without debate being allowed. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury says that this consequential closure will be used with the greatest discretion, and I must say that I cannot imagine a more miserable argument than that. With this Rule in existence there will be a constant temptation to hon. Members to make use of it. I do not see that there would be any insurmountable difficulty in the way of drafting the Rule so that there would be no chance of its being abused.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I also would urge upon the Government the desirability of answering the Ques-

tion which has been addressed to them by the hon. Member above the Gangway (Mr. H. Gardner). It may look like a paradox to state it, but to my mind a clause of a Bill may be more important than the Bill itself; and yet, by the Rule the Government propose, consideration of a clause may be prevented. The proposal is a dangerous one, as it will put a premium on the action of any hon. Member who may exhaust the patience of the House by frivolous Amendments, and thus secure the running through of the remaining clauses of a Bill. We Irish Members are not inclined to trust the Tory majority—or even the Liberal Party, if it insists upon retaining us as a minority in this House, keeping us here against our will,—nor are we inclined to trust any future Chairman of Committees or Speaker, who will be most probably a Party man elected for Party purposes with a view of running measures through the House. In saying these things I must be understood as saying them with all due respect to the present occupant of the Chair in the House and in Committee of Ways and Means. It is absurd to say that no Party will attempt to rush a Bill through the House. How do we know when a Government may not wish to force our hand? We should not have so much to complain of if we knew when they intended to do it, but they are not likely to give us warning beforehand.

MR. GENT-DAVIS (Lambeth, Kennington): I should like to know if the hon. Member is speaking to the Amendment before the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not now out of Order in the line he is pursuing.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: I would point out to hon. Members that, if the *clôture*, as it is now proposed, had been in existence some years ago, what is now called the Healy Clause—which is one of the most vital portions of the Land Act—would not in all probability have been passed.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Rossendale): Hon. Members have confined themselves almost entirely to indicating the inconveniences arising from the Rule, and have failed to suggest any remedy which might not altogether defeat the operation of the Rule. At the

same time it does appear to me that a real blot in the Rule has been pointed out by the hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. E. Harrington) and by others who preceded him. There is a difficulty as the words stand if the House desires to get rid of a large number of frivolous or unimportant Amendments, and yet wishes to discuss two or three or more which really raise questions of importance. Under the Rule as proposed, it appears that there will be no alternative except adopting the clause as it stands and so negativing without discussion *bond fide* Amendments, or not applying the closure on the clause at all. I think it would be possible to some extent to get over this difficulty by introducing some words which will render it unnecessary for the Committee or the House to proceed to the adoption of the whole clause. What is wanted is a method of summarily disposing of some portion of the clause which will enable the Committee or the House to proceed to the discussion of an Amendment on a different portion of the clause. I would suggest that a Motion should be made that certain words of the clause, to be defined in the Motion, stand part of the clause, or that the clause stand part of or be added to the Bill. That, it appears to me, would enable the House to summarily dispose of part of the clause, and would enable the Committee to get rid of any Amendments which it might consider obstructive on the part of the clause and enable the House or the Committee to proceed to the substantial Amendments which might be proposed on a subsequent part of the clause.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The Government are of opinion that the difficulty pointed out by the noble Marquess and other Members would have been met by the ordinary procedure of the Chair; but looking to the strong opinions which have been expressed from various parts of the House, and seeing that it will be simply carrying out the view we have always maintained, and we are anxious to promote—we will receive the suggestion of my noble Friend as a way of escaping from the difficulty raised on the words before the House. The proposal, so far as I understand it, as that in line 11, after the word "That," these words should be inserted—

"Certain words of the clause to be defined in the Motion stand part of the clause, or that the whole clause stand part of or be added to the Bill."

The question—which will depend on the state of the Notice Paper—will be to put the clause in force, or to debate it up to the point where those important Amendments are proposed to be introduced, thus getting rid of any dilatory Amendments at once. It will not be necessary to put the whole of the clause, but so much of it as would take us to the point where important Amendments would arise. The Government have no hesitation in accepting the suggestion of the noble Marquess.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I am sorry to interfere at this point, but I do think that seeing that the Government are in a yielding mood that we should urge on them to take the view of the matter that I have urged on them more than once—namely, that there should be some means laid down for discriminating between important and unimportant Amendments. Some words enabling this distinction to be made could be inserted in the Amendment suggested by the noble Marquess, and accepted by Her Majesty's Government. I think a Member whose Amendment is about to be *clôtured* before it has been discussed, should be allowed to remonstrate—in writing if you like—and to offer reasons why an apparently frivolous Amendment ought to be entertained. Something should be allowed to pass between the person who knows the importance of an Amendment and the person who does not know it, to enable the former to communicate the reasons which urge him to endeavour to get his Amendment entertained.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): The point to which the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) has referred, is one on which those who are most anxious for an efficient closure have felt great difficulty. I think my noble Friend has made a very practical and wise suggestion which will be found to remove the objections which many of us had to the Rule if we are allowed time to consider it. I think my noble Friend has removed the difficulty in regard to permitting a clause to be put without giving a chance for the consideration of Amendments which are *bond fide*, and are

intended to improve the clause. I rise to suggest that these words should be printed, so that we may see how the proposal would work out.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I think the announcement we have just heard from the Treasury Bench is a sufficient indication that I was justified in putting down the Amendment which has led to such an important declaration. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) has been good enough to accept the suggestion of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale. It is difficult for us to make up our minds as to the full effect of the words the right hon. Gentleman proposes to insert in the Rule, and I would, therefore, suggest that as we are within a few minutes of the hour when, according to the Rules of the House, the debate must terminate, the Government should consent to the adjournment before I consent to withdraw my Amendment. I will now move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 "That the Debate be now adjourned."
 —(Mr. Parnell.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): I hope the hon. Gentleman will not persevere in his Motion for adjournment. There is obviously a desire on all sides of the House to come to a conclusion on the matter, but we cannot discuss the suggestion of the noble Marquess until the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite is removed from his path.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): The object of my hon. Friend in moving the adjournment is to have an opportunity of seeing the Amendment of the noble Marquess on the Paper. If he approves of it, on Friday he will withdraw his Amendment; but, on the other hand, he may not approve of it; he may prefer his own. The Government must see that they have nothing to gain by refusing to assent to this proposal to adjourn the debate so far as time is concerned.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The question is a very complicated one, and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has not only to consider the intrinsic worth of the words proposed by the noble Marquess, but he has also to

compare them with his own Amendment, and make up his mind whether he prefers his own words to them.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The case for adjournment is perfectly unanswerable. We have been debating an Amendment the whole day. At the outset the Government admitted that the Rule required Amendment, and that we had pointed out a difficulty; but they said, "We cannot get out of it." If the noble Marquess had suggested his Amendment four or five hours ago the whole of this day's debating would have been spared the House. What has occurred? Why, after five hours' debate, during which our arguments were treated with contempt, we have drawn from the noble Marquess that the difficulty can be met in some way, and the Government propose a way of meeting it. This is a most complicated question, and one which it is not possible to make up one's mind upon in a moment. Even on these Benches we are divided in opinion with regard to the noble Marquess's proposal, for I am inclined to think that it would make the position of things worse, whilst some of my hon. Friends are inclined to take an opposite view.

COLONEL NOLAN: It would be much more gracious for the Government to say they will agree to the adjournment, than to allow the debate to cease by the Rules of the House, as it will, if I or some other hon. Member talk for two minutes more.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I could not rise whilst hon. Members were speaking. I have only to say that the Government agree to the adjournment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned till Friday.*

House adjourned at ten minutes
 before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 10th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—
Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Act
(1886) Amendment* (39).

Committee—Glebe Lands (16); Truro Bishopric
and Chapter Acts Amendment (33).

Report—Lunacy Acts Amendment (34-40).

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—*Report*—Drainage
and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* (29).

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 34.) REPORT.

Amendments reported (according to
Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), in rising to move that the Report of the Amendments be agreed to, said, that in order to meet the views which had been expressed on a former occasion by his noble and learned Friends (Lord Selborne and Lord Herschell), he proposed to amend Sub-section 11 by inserting a provision into it, to the effect that where a person had been sent to an asylum or a private house, and had not been visited by a County Court Judge or a magistrate having jurisdiction at the place where he was confined within seven days after the commencement of such confinement, the person confined should have a right to be seen by any County Court Judge or any magistrate having any jurisdiction whom he should designate.

Moved, "That the Report of Amendments be agreed to."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he objected to the proposed alteration, on the ground that it did not carry his view into effect, which was that where the lunatic was within the same jurisdiction, the magistrate who made the order should see him. In other cases, it seemed to him that it would be very unfit that the lunatic should choose the magistrate by whom he was to be seen.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he also objected to the Amendment on a similar ground. The duty proposed to be cast upon a magistrate was an invidious one, and he thought many magistrates would sooner resign their commissions than perform it. There would be great difficulty in securing the attendance of any particular magistrate or County Court Judge at any particular time. What

would be the result if the particular magistrate designated by the lunatic, although having jurisdiction in the district, happened to be residing in London for some months in the year?

LORD HALSBURY said, he was prepared to accept any other words which the noble and learned Lord might suggest, his only object in making the Amendment being to meet his views and those of the noble and learned Lord (the Earl of Selborne).

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, that on the third reading he would move as an Amendment that the magistrate who made the order should be the person who visited the lunatic, when he was still within that magistrate's jurisdiction.

Motion agreed to.

Further Amendments made.

Bill to be *printed*, as amended; and to be read 3^a on *Thursday* next. (No. 49.)

GLEBE LANDS BILL. — (No. 16.)

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to
Order).

Clauses 1 and 2 *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Sale of glebe by or with approval of Land Commissioners).

THE BISHOP of LICHFIELD (Dr. MACLAGAN), in rising to move an Amendment, to the effect that a sale of glebe should not take place under the Act where there was a "concurrent objection of the Bishop and patron," to be signified within 21 days, said, the Bishop was to be regarded as the responsible steward of the ancient heritage of the Church, and there was no reason to suppose that he would interfere unnecessarily to prevent any transaction for the benefit of the clergy or the permanent advantage of the benefice, and a Bishop, of all men, was sure to sympathize with the clergy in their distress and be willing to assist them in any reasonable way. At the same time many a necessitous and panic-stricken clergyman would be under a strong temptation when rents were low to rush into the market and to sell the ancient lands of the Church at a disadvantage; whereas if they were enabled to wait a year or two they could, probably, obtain much better terms. The Land Commissioners could not have the same grounds as the Bishop for forming a sound judgment as to the desirableness of an immediate sale. But

he proposed that objection should not operate unless it were concurred in by the patron as well as the Bishop. If it were said that a Bishop had no such veto under the Ecclesiastical Leasing Act, the answer was that a Bishop was, *ex officio*, one of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and could call for the production of every document; but in this case he could only address an appeal to the Land Commissioners as the Bill stood. At present no sale could take place without the consent of the patron. But this Bill left out the patron as well as the Bishop. The Church had a right to have an independent voice in a matter so grave as that of parting with land which had belonged to it for centuries. If a mistake were made by the Land Commissioners it would be irrevocable, but if a mistake were made by the Bishop and the patron it could easily be corrected by another application for the sale of the glebe at a future time when it might be more evident that the land could be sold advantageously. Under these circumstances, he earnestly hoped their Lordships would give a favourable consideration to the Amendment which he now begged to move.

Moved, in page 1, leave out lines 19 and 20, and insert ("and that no objection to the sale has been made by the bishop or patron within twenty-one days from the date of receiving the said notice.")—(*The Lord Bishop of Lichfield*.)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, it was with pain that he differed from the right rev. Prelate. The Amendment would introduce a new departure. The object of the Bill was to render the sale of glebes easier than at present. In some dioceses there had been no sale of glebe land for years, probably because the Bishop had set his face against such sales. It was quite right the Bishop should be consulted before glebe lands were sold; but that was a very different thing from giving an absolute veto. The Bishop had every opportunity of expressing his opinion, short of placing an absolute veto on a sale. The Land Commissioners would hear all he had to say, and they would act as an independent body whose business gave them a knowledge of every parish, which placed them in a position equal to that of a Bishop for determining whether a sale was desirable or not. It would be a perfectly new thing to place the Bishop's veto in

an Act of Parliament. This practice had gone on for 40 years without such a veto; and, although he should be extremely sorry to differ from the right rev. Prelate, he trusted their Lordships would not insist upon the veto.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, surely no one was so good a judge in the long run as the Bishop of the diocese. The Land Commissioners might be very good judges of the value of the land, but there were many other things to be considered. They ought not to sacrifice the future interests of a parish to the present whim or fancy of the clergyman in possession. The price of land might go up, and it would be a most serious thing for the Church that the glebe lands should be sold during the current agricultural distress.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that no doubt the Bishop had the interests of the parish at heart, perhaps more than any man; but where did he get that power of judging better than the Land Commissioners? He doubted very much whether if the Bishop exercised his veto he would do so on the ground that he knew the parish better than the Commissioners; he would probably exercise it on general principles. The noble and learned Lord (Lord Grimthorpe) had spoken of the price of land going up, but this was a matter upon which no one could speak with confidence. What, he would ask, was to be done while things were coming round? What was to become of the unlucky and impoverished clergymen who had nothing to live on except their glebes? Were they not to be paid, their churches not to be kept up; were the services of the Church to be imperilled, and, in fact, the whole machinery of the parish stopped? He could imagine nothing more wretched than the position of the clergyman who at the present time was compelled to rely upon glebe lands for his income. He knew himself cases in which some years ago the income was £1,300, and now they were absolutely worth nothing. If the clergyman could sell the land and get something in Consols, would it not be a benefit to the parish? Were they to think only of the future, of what would happen 30 years hence? To some extent surely those 30 years might be left

to take care of themselves. He believed the Land Commissioners might be trusted to do that which would only be a benefit to the living. He protested against entirely neglecting the present for the sake of the future, and forgetting not only the material but the terrible spiritual injury which they caused by continuing the ruin that existed at present.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE said, he differed entirely from the views of the noble Marquess. Property now depressed might in a few years become again very valuable. Were they, therefore, to sell for a trifle that which in a few years might be of great value to the Church? The doctrine of the noble Marquess was the most monstrous he had ever heard enunciated in their Lordships' House, and he was astonished that a Conservative Government should have brought forward a proposal so subversive of Conservative principles with regard to land. He believed that the more that question was thought of and discussed in Parliament the more true would appear to the public the sentiments which he had taken the liberty to express.

On Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause?" Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 61; Not-Contents 21: Majority 40.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, he hoped at least that the Amendment which he had now to propose to the clause would be thought a reasonable one. The clause provided that the Bishop might state objections to a sale of glebe land if he had such objections, and it seemed to be intended that he should merely receive an answer that the Land Commissioners considered that his objections ought not to be entertained. Now, he ventured to propose that as the Bishop would have furnished the Land Commissioners with reasons against allowing the sale, so the Land Commissioners, when setting aside those reasons, should furnish in return to the Bishop an account in writing of the reasons for which they thought his objections should be set aside. The Bishop had a registry in which the reasons of the Land Commissioners would be preserved, and the full history of the transaction remain on record. The most rev. Prelate concluded by moving the insertion of words to carry out this object.

Moved, in page 2, line 3, at end of line insert as a fresh subsection:—"If upon notice of a proposed sale under this Act the bishop of the diocese objects to the sale, and the Land Commissioners are satisfied that such objection ought not to prevent the sale, the Land Commissioners shall inform the bishop in writing of their reasons for being so satisfied."—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, he had no objection to this Amendment.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY suggested that the patron should be furnished with the Commissioners' reasons as well as the Bishop.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said he was of opinion that the Land Commissioners should inform in writing the patron of the living as well as the Bishop of the diocese of their reasons for setting aside their objections to the sale; and he proposed to insert words in the clause to that effect.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*, and *added to the Bill.*

Clause 4 (Effect of sale) *agreed to*, and *added to the Bill.*

Clause 5 (Application and investment of purchase money).

On the Motion of Viscount CROSS, the following Amendments were *agreed to*:—In page 2, line 28, leave out ("or apply"); line 37, before ("and") insert—

"(And in the purchase of securities of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and of those securities of any county or municipal borough in which trustees are by law authorised to invest either generally or whenever they have power to invest in railway debenture stock, if such county or municipal borough had, according to the census last published next before the date of the investment, a population exceeding one hundred thousand.")

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD moved to amend the clause by the insertion of a provision authorizing the Land Commissioners to purchase any land adjacent to the parsonage house the possession of which, in the judgment of the Commissioners, would be for the benefit of the benefice and for the convenient enjoyment of such house. He did not wish to give the Commissioners any power to make speculative investments, and the object of the Amendment was simply to purchase such small pieces of land as might in some instances be

almost necessary for the enjoyment of the parsonage.

Moved, in page 2, line 40, after ("glebe") insert—" (c.) In the purchase of any land adjacent to the parsonage house the possession of which in the judgment of the Commissioners would be for the benefit of the benefice or for the convenient enjoyment of such house."—(*The Lord Bishop of Lichfield*.)

VISCOUNT CROSS said, that the power to invest in land had been advisedly left out of the original Bill, because it was not thought wise that the Land Commissioners should invest in land. But the point which had been raised by the right rev. Prelate had certainly brought forward a case where it might be desirable that they should have the power. He had no objection, therefore, to the words proposed being introduced, as he thought they could trust the Commissioners not to invest in speculative land.

Amendment agreed to.

On the Motion of Viscount Cross, the following Amendments were *agreed to* :— In page 3, line 2, leave out ("names of the endowment trustees") and insert ("name of the authority"); line 4, leave out ("Land Commissioners") and insert ("said authority"), and leave out from ("application") to ("and") in line 5; line 6, at end of line insert as a fresh sub-section—

"The said authority shall, if the money arose from the sale of land the whole of which was appropriated or annexed to the benefice by or with the concurrence of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, be those Governors, and in any other case shall be the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, and securities bought out of the purchase money under this Act of the glebe of any benefice and held by such authority shall be entered in the books kept by any body corporate, company, or persons in relation to those securities in the name of the said authority, but on a separate account ex-parte the benefice; such body corporate, company, or persons, however, shall treat the said authority as the sole and absolute owner of the securities, and shall arrange with the said authority for the payment of the dividends, whether by dividend warrants sent through the post or otherwise; to such persons as may be directed by the said authority, and the enactments relating to dividend warrants shall apply to the warrants sent to any such person in like manner as if they were sent to the holder of the securities at his request."

Page 3, line 7, leave out ("an investment") and insert ("The said authority shall hold any securities"); line 8, leave out ("shall be held"); line 9, after second ("and") insert—

The Bishop of Lichfield

("May from time to time, if occasion requires, sell such securities and apply the proceeds on the said trusts and for the said purposes, and shall cause");

line 10, leave out ("investment shall") and insert ("securities to"), and after ("applied") insert—

("In such manner (if any) as may be directed in pursuance of this Act, and subject thereto, in such manner");

line 13, leave out sub-section (4).

Clause 6 (Endowment trustees) *struck out*.

Clause 7 (Restrictions as to sales), as amended, *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Clause 8 (Provision where land is in mortgage), as amended, *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Clause 9 (Regulations as to sale)..

LORD LINGEN recommended that the Sanitary Authority should be the only purchaser to whom the glebe should be offered for purposes of allotment; and that after allotments had been made by such Authority, a provision should be added, as in the Irish Land Act of 1881, enabling the tenants in occupation to purchase their holdings. Such a provision might furnish considerable security against loss to the parish.

Clause *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Clause 10 (Regulations as to assurances) *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Clause 11 (Purchase of glebe lands by sanitary authority for letting to the labouring classes).

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD said, that this clause related to allotments, and he wished to add to it these words—

"In addition to the land (the glebe), the sanitary authority may purchase any land situate within the districts of the said authority or in any adjoining sanitary district."

As the clause was at present framed, it placed the clergyman in an invidious position as compared with other land-owners; in fact, it singled him out as the only person compelled to provide allotments for the poor. That, he thought, was not fair. Why should this invidious distinction be made? He urged that it was a most unheard of interference with the freedom of sale to make it the law of the country that, if the land was sold, it should only be sold in a particular direction. If the incum-

bent should see reason to refuse to sell ill-feeling might be created which it would take years to remove. He thought that the power of purchase which was to be given by the Bill should be extended, and, in addition to glebe lands, the Sanitary Authorities ought to receive power to purchase any land suitable for allotments within their own district, or any adjoining sanitary district. It was to be regretted that the Allotment Question had been mixed up with this matter, in order, it appeared, to meet a popular cry. He thought that the measure, instead of being a Glebe Lands Bill, might appear to be a Bill for Providing Allotments. In fact, it appeared to be devised—but he was sure that was never intended—to provide allotments for the poor at the expense of the clergyman. Why should the clergy not have the power themselves of letting the glebe lands in allotments? He had heard that a general Bill with respect to allotments was to be introduced by the Government, and he could have wished that the sale of glebe lands for allotments had been kept out of this Bill. The right rev. Prelate concluded by moving an Amendment intended to carry out the object he had in view.

Moved, in page 6, line 23, after (“thereof”) insert (“or any land situated within the district of the said authority or in any adjoining sanitary district”).—(*The Lord Bishop of Lichfield.*)

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, he should support the Amendment.

VISCOUNT CROSS said, he greatly regretted that he must again object to an Amendment of his right rev. Friend. He thought, however, that to give a general power to the Sanitary Authorities to buy land for the purpose of allotments would not come properly under a Bill for the sale of glebe lands. He would point out, besides, that a clergyman could, however, at the present time, let his land in allotments if he liked to do so. The Government intended to bring in a general Bill in respect of allotments, which would give power to buy not only glebe lands, but other lands, and it would, he thought, meet the right rev. Prelate’s objection.

THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM said, he thought it was very undesirable to increase still further the burdens of the Local Authorities.

VISCOUNT CROSS said, no one was more opposed to increasing the burdens of Local Authorities than he was, and the Bill would not have that effect.

LORD HERSCHELL said, that in his opinion the Amendment, if it were adopted, would make the case rather worse than better for the incumbent.

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD said, that after what had fallen from the noble Viscount he would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn*.

On the Motion of Viscount Cross, the following Amendments were *agreed to*:—In page 6, line 24, after (“letting”) insert (“or continuing the letting of”); page 7, line 18, at end of subsection insert as a fresh sub-section—

“The sanitary authority shall not delegate to any committee of their number any of the powers vested in such authority under this Act;”

line 27, at end of clause insert—

“Provided that if any Act is passed during the present session of Parliament relating to the provision and management of allotments, the enactments of that Act relating to the management of allotments and to the sale of land no longer needed for the purpose of allotments, or less suitable for that purpose than other land, shall extend in substitution for the enactments of this Act to allotments provided under this Act, in like manner as if they had been provided under the said Act.”

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*, and *added to the Bill*.

Clause 12 (Substitution of county authority for sanitary authority).

On the Motion of Viscount Cross, the following Amendment was *agreed to*:—In page 7, line 42, at end of line insert as a fresh sub-section:—

“The prohibition on the delegation of any powers to a committee of the sanitary authority shall not apply to the county authority.”

Clause 13 (Power to make rules) *agreed to*, and *added to the Bill*.

Clause 14 (As to action by patrons).

On the Motion of Viscount Cross, the following Amendments were *agreed to*:—In page 8, line 42, leave out (“or persons”), and after (“apply”) insert—

(“And of any patrons or persons other than the patrons mentioned in the said enactments, or the Duke of Cornwall”);

line 43, at end insert as a fresh paragraph—

(26 & 27 *Vict. c. 49.*)

“Where the advowson of any benefice is part of the possessions of the Duchy of Cornwall,

any notice required to be given to the patron of such benefice for the purposes of this Act may be given to the keeper of the records of the Duchy of Cornwall, and any act authorised or required to be done by the patron of such benefice for the purposes of this Act may be done under the seal of the Duchy of Cornwall; and in the event of the Duke of Cornwall being under the age of twenty-one years, or of there being no Duke of Cornwall, may be done in the manner in which any act in relation to the possessions of the Duchy of Cornwall may be done in pursuance of section thirty-eight or thirty-nine of the Duchy of Cornwall Management Act, 1863, as the case requires."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*, and *added to the Bill*.

On the Motion of The Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY, the following new Clause was *agreed to*, and inserted after Clause 14:—

(Amendment of, and saving for, Ecclesiastical Leasing Acts.)

(5 & 6 Vict. c. 108; 21 & 22 Vict. c. 57; 28 & 29 Vict. c. 57.)

"Such notice to the bishop of the diocese as may be prescribed for the purposes of this Act shall be substituted for the period of three months' notice which, in pursuance of section one of the Ecclesiastical Leasing Act, 1858, is required to be given to the bishop of the diocese on every proposed sale of glebe lands under the provisions of this Act, but, save as aforesaid, nothing in this Act shall be held to limit or prejudice the powers and provisions contained in the Ecclesiastical Leasing Acts or in the Acts administered by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty."

Schedule, as amended, *agreed to*.

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Monday* next; and Bill to be *printed*, as amended. (No. 41.)

TRURO BISHOPRIC AND CHAPTER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 33.)

(The Lord Bishop of Truro.)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

THE LORD STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD (The Earl of MOUNT-EDGECUMBE), in moving that the House go into Committee on this Bill, explained that the object of the measure was to define the respective rights of the parishioners of the old church of St. Mary, Truro, and of the Dean and Chapter of the new cathedral. It also provided for the formation of a Chapter Endowment Fund, made the Bishop the Dean till such time as a Dean was appointed, and constituted the Vicar of St. Mary's the Sub-Dean. It further provided for the transfer of the

patronage of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, in the County of Cornwall, to the new Cathedral Body. The Bill gave effect to arrangements which had been most carefully thought out and were concurred in by all the parties concerned.

House in Committee accordingly; Amendments made: The Report thereof to be received *To-morrow*.

INCUMBENTS OF BENEFICES LOANS EXTEN-

SION ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL

[H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Act, 1886—Was *presented* by The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos; read 1st. (No. 39.)

House adjourned at Seven o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 10th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—considered in Committee

—ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE).

PUBLIC BILLS—Ordered—*First Reading*—Criminal Law (Costs) * [191]; Vagrant Act Amendment * [192].

Second Reading—Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension * [171].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF MOTION.

MR. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) had given Notice of his intention to move the following Motion:—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Various Powers) Bill to inquire whether or not any modifications of the constitution or mode of election of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board may be necessary or expedient, and to make provision for the same accordingly, and that all Petitions against the Bill, presented within the time limited by the Standing Orders, relating to the constitution or mode of election of the Board be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their counsel, agents, or witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitioners."

The hon. Member said: I wish to postpone the Motion which stands in my name, in the hope that some concessions

may be made on the part of the promoters of the Bill which may prevent the necessity for discussing the Instruction I propose to move.

Motion *postponed*.

QUESTIONS.

SCOTLAND—REGISTER HOUSE, EDINBURGH—SEARCHES OF INCUMBRANCES.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, How many non-official searches of incumbrances have been made in the Register House, Edinburgh, from the abridgments and indexes, since 1st January, 1878, to 31st December, 1886; also, how many official searches have been made, or partly made, from the search sheet during the same period; whether, in the official searches, purporting to be made by means of the search sheet, the abridgments are still used, and to what extent; and, whether the Treasury intend continuing the two systems of searching, by abridgments and search sheets respectively, necessitating a double staff of clerks and double expenses otherwise?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The number of non-official searches of incumbrances made in the Register House, Edinburgh, from the abridgments and indexes since January 1st, 1878, to December 31st, 1886, was 17,655. The number of official searches made, or partly made, from the search sheet during the same period was 13,490; the official searches without search sheet numbered 3,084. The total number of official searches during the same period was 16,574. In the official searches made only partly from the search sheets, the abridgments are still used in respect of the periods to which search sheets do not yet extend; but as the lapse of each year increases to that extent the period for which search sheets are prepared, the use of the abridgments is being gradually lessened. The preparation of search sheets is being carried on as rapidly as possible; but it must be some years before they can be completed for the full period of 40 years required for searching purposes. In the meantime, it is not practicable to discontinue the abridgment. It is not correct to say that the use of the two systems necessitates

double the amount of staff and expense which would suffice for either system.

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—MR. L. H. JAMES, OFFICIAL ASSIGNEE.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether, at the time when the late Official Assignee of the Irish Court of Bankruptcy, Mr. Lucius Henry James, absconded, there were found in his desk deposit receipts for £30,000; whether £6,000 of that amount, as being countersigned by the Chief Registrar, could, at any moment, be converted into cash; whether the general orders of the Court prohibit the assignee from holding, at any time, more than £250; and, if so, why this order was not enforced; whether better provision is now made for the prevention of this abuse; whether the Chief Registrar now reports to the Court any departure from the Rules; and, whether any system of audit now exists for the due verification of the £40,000 annual expenditure of the Irish Bankruptcy Courts, and the due distribution of the assets?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) said, that in reply to the question of fact in the first three paragraphs, his answer was in the affirmative. Up to the time of Mr. James' default, there was considerable carelessness in enforcing the general orders; but he was informed that since then they had been strictly observed, and the Chief Registrar always reported at once any departure from the Rules. New Rules were under consideration, with a view to making the audit more effective.

DOVER HARBOUR BOARD—THE ACCOUNTS.

MAJOR DICKSON (Dover) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he is aware that, by the Act of Geo. IV., c. 31, the Dover Harbour Board is required to render Accounts annually to both Houses of Parliament; and, if so, whether this has been done; and, whether there is any objection to lay upon the Table of the House the Accounts since 1861, which by the Act 34 & 35 Vict. c. 166, the Board is required to furnish annually to the Board of Trade, each Account to show the date upon which it was received?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I have made inquiry of the Dover Harbour Board, who inform me that the Act of *Geo. IV.*, referred to by my hon. Friend, applies to passing tolls which were continued by that Act and have been since abolished, and that the existing Board receive no moneys whatever in respect of any dues which the Warden and Assistants of Dover Harbour were authorized to levy under that Act. They have, therefore, rendered no Accounts to Parliament. The Returns of Receipts of Expenditure of the present Harbour Board, who were first constituted in 1861, have been regularly sent to the Local Government Board since 1871, as required by statute, and are annually published in the Local Taxation Returns. Between 1861 and 1871 they were sent to the Home Office. Under these circumstances, the Board of Trade have not deemed it necessary, in pursuance of the Act 34 & 35 *Vict.*, c. 166, to direct any particular form in which the Accounts are to be furnished to them, as they have been hitherto content with the Accounts included in the Local Taxation Returns, which are laid before Parliament and printed every year. If my hon. Friend desires to move that the Returns shall be printed in a separate form the Board of Trade will offer no objection.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND) — MR. EDMOND DAVOREN, KILMALLOCK.

MR. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that the Kilmallock Board of Guardians, County Limerick, recently received notice of the intended eviction of Mr. Edmond Davoren, Elton; whether this is the Mr. Davoren, in whose interest Captain Plunkett, R.M., went to Messieurs Mahon and Guinness, land agents, Dublin, to influence them to give a fair settlement to their tenant; whether they consented to take £93 in satisfaction of all arrears; whether Mr. Davoren consented; whether the agents insisted on Mr. Davoren signing an agreement depriving him of any right to his improvements; whether the improvements are worth over £1,000; and, whether, if the eviction should take place, and the landlord refuse to pay Mr. Davoren the difference between his indebtedness, *i.e.*,

£90 and £1,000, the value of his improvements, the Government intend to aid the landlord in his threatened eviction?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: The Kilmallock Board of Guardians has received notice of the intended eviction of Edmond Davoren. I am unable to give any information as to the matters inquired into in the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth paragraphs of the Question; and as to the tenant's improvements, he is entitled under the existing law to obtain full compensation from the landlord for them, no matter what their value may be, and whether he is evicted for non-payment of rent or not.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether he has communicated with Captain Plunkett in reference to this matter?

MR. HOLMES: No, Sir; because I am aware that Captain Plunkett stated he did not know who the person was.

MR. FINUCANE: Is it a fact that Mr. Davoren is entitled to compensation for his improvements, seeing that the interest in his farm was sold by the landlord six months ago in Limerick?

MR. HOLMES: Any tenant who makes improvements, whether he be evicted for non-payment of rent or not, is under the law entitled to compensation for those improvements. Of course, if he allows the interest in his farm to be transferred that is another matter.

INLAND REVENUE — THE "DEATH DUTIES" ON LAND IN ULSTER.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, owing to the custom of the sale of tenant-right and the local and competitive value of the right of occupation in Ulster, land in Ulster is subjected to more than double the amount of Death Duties levied out of land of equal value elsewhere in the three kingdoms; and, whether, in his financial arrangements, he can see his way to remedy the grievance alleged to exist?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I do not consider this a fair statement of the case. The reference to land of equal value is misleading. Death Duties are levied in

Ireland on the tenant-right because that tenant-right represents property, and Death Duties are levied on property. If that property has been created partly by the local and competitive value to which the hon. Member alludes, it does not for that reason cease to be property which is fairly assessable with the Death Duties. Any property, of whatever kind it may be, as the hon. Member is aware, is subject to Death Duties.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I meant land of the same quality.

MR. GOSCHEN: If land of the same quality under the dual ownership in Ulster is a more valuable property than elsewhere, it is subject to the Death Duties on that increased value because it is an increased value.

SOUTH AMERICA—BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA—THE BOUNDARY.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, considering the increasing importance of the subject, and the breach of diplomatic relations between this country and Venezuela, Her Majesty's Government will consider the advisability of sending a Commission to settle the boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have every wish to arrive at a settlement of the boundary question; but no such step as that suggested can be taken so long as the Venezuelan Government maintains the suspension of diplomatic relations with this country.

AFRICA (EAST COAST)—RUMOURED ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY.

MR. RICHARD (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether England has recently annexed territory on the East Coast of Africa extending between Mombasa and the mouth of the Tana River, or in that vicinity; or have any steps been taken, or negotiations entered into, with a view to such annexation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSON) (Manchester, N.E.): No such steps have been taken, nor have any such negotiations been entered into. The territory

mentioned is part of the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar, the independence of which is recognized by Great Britain as well as by France and Germany.

SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT—THE PATENT MUSEUM.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether the facilities hitherto afforded to the public to visit the models and specifications of the Patent Museum have been materially curtailed since the transfer of the Museum to the Science and Art Department; whether especially the specifications have been removed to a distance from the models, and must now be consulted separately; whether the models and specifications are now only open free to the public on three days a-week, although for nearly 30 years they were open on every weekday without charge; and, whether the collection, which used to be open till 10 p.m. on three nights a-week is now closed to the public after 6 p.m. at latest?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The facilities which were formerly afforded to the public to visit the models and specifications of the Patent Museum have been, to some extent, curtailed since the transfer of the Museum to the Science and Art Department. The models and specifications were formerly in adjacent rooms. The former have now been removed to the galleries on the west side of Exhibition Road, and amalgamated with the other Science Collections of the Department. There are at present no means of lighting these galleries at night, and they are closed at from 4 to 6 p.m., according to the time of year. The specifications have been kept on the east side of Exhibition Road, and are placed in the Science Library, which is open till 10 p.m. on three nights a-week—namely, Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays, when the Museum and this portion of the Library are open free. The models and specifications are only open free to the public on three days a-week.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDS—INVESTMENTS.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty,

Whether the Greenwich Hospital Funds, now in Three per Cent Annuities, can be legally invested in Australian Four per Cent Government Securities; and, if this can be done, will he endeavour to confer upon the Greenwich pensioners the great advantage of the large additional income to be obtained by this means, and which would enable the Admiralty to continue the payment of the Greenwich age pensions to seamen?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Under certain conditions the securities named in the question may, by the Greenwich Hospital Act of 1865, be used for the investment of the Hospital funds. The Admiralty have recently taken steps for the re-investment of a large portion of the money previously invested in the Three per Cent Annuities, and they have been able during the last 18 months to increase the income of Greenwich Hospital by over £5,000 a-year by such re-investments. The amount invested in the Funds has been thus reduced from £1,645,000 to £815,000.

ARMY—RETIREMENT OF COMMAND- ING OFFICERS.

GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in view of the decision that for an officer to command a regiment for less than four years is detrimental to the interests of the Service, it is a fact that, in the course of the years 1887-8, 63 Commanding Officers are to be retired, 57 of whom after two years, and six of whom after little more than one year, in command; and, if so, if he would consider the advantage to the Service if, in certain cases, there should be the power of continuing officers in command for the approved period of four years?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): My hon. and gallant Friend's figures are substantially correct. The lieutenant colonels referred to will have served their full period of six years in the rank, and they cannot be retained longer with their battalions without injury to either the second lieutenant colonels or the senior majors. Officers promoted to be regimental lieutenant colonels from the commencement of the present year will not be removed from their commands until

they have served four years, unless required for other duty.

METROPOLIS—FOREIGN LABOUR IN EAST LONDON.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, What steps have been taken to collect information as to foreign labour in East London; and, whether he can give the House any information as to the approximate number of destitute foreign immigrants into the United Kingdom from the Continent of Europe in each of the last five years respectively?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The time of the Labour Correspondent has been so fully occupied in important and pressing duties that up to the present the Board of Trade have been unable to utilize his services in dealing with the special subject referred to by the hon. and gallant Gentleman; but the question will not be overlooked. With regard to the second portion of the hon. and gallant Member's Question, I can only repeat what I said in answer to a previous Question—that there is no record of immigration of foreigners into the United Kingdom which discriminates between foreign immigrants who are destitute and those who are not.

CAPTAIN COLOMB: Is it not the case that there is no record at all kept of foreigners coming into this country from Europe?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: I think if the hon. and gallant Member will look at the Return he will find that there is a record; but it does not distinguish between those who are destitute and those who are not.

ALIEN ACTS—IMMIGRATION OF DESTITUTE ALIENS.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What great States of the World, other than Great Britain, permit the immigration of destitute aliens without restriction; and, whether Her Majesty's Government is prevented by any Treaty obligations from making such regulations as shall put a stop to the free import of destitute aliens into the United Kingdom?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): The Foreign Office are unable to state, without inquiry, which of the great States, if any, permit the immigration of aliens without restriction on account of their destitution. The United States of America do not permit it. Her Majesty's Government is prevented by no Treaty obligations from forbidding the free immigration of any aliens, provided that they were empowered by law to do so, which is not the case.

ARMY—MEDICAL STAFF (INDIA)—
BRIGADE-SURGEON WILLIAM
GRAVES.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Secretary of State for War, Why Brigade-Surgeon William Graves, while serving on the Medical Staff in India, was passed over eleven times for promotion from rank of surgeon major, he having been on sick leave but on full pay at the time those promotions were made, the said sick leave having been granted to him in consequence of illness contracted while on duty; whether in every other respect but temporary physical unfitness he was qualified for promotion; and, whether, in the circumstances of the case, this officer's promotion may be ante-dated so as to place him in his original position in the Army List?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): It being a rule of the Medical Department that an officer cannot be promoted to the rank of brigade-surgeon unless he be fit physically for general service, I am afraid that this promotion cannot be ante-dated.

WAR OFFICE—BURSTING OF RIFLED
GUNS—THE RETURN.

SIR JOHN DORINGTON (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) asked the Secretary of State for War, in reference to the Return just presented of the number of rifled guns that have burst or failed, What proportion of the 31 guns there mentioned bear to the total number of guns in the possession of the Army and Navy during the years specified in that Return?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): The number of guns in posses-

sion of the Army and Navy during the years specified is 9,322. The total ratio borne by the 31 guns that have failed in any way whatever is about 0.3 per cent of the whole.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875—ASSESS-
MENT OF ALLOTMENT GARDENS.

SIR FREDERICK MAPPIN (York, W.R., Hallamshire) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether "allotment gardens" without any buildings upon them are liable to be assessed at the full net annual value, or in the proportion of one-fourth part only of such net annual value thereof, as if they were arable, meadow, or pasture ground only, or as market gardens or nursery grounds?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The question whether an allotment garden without any building is liable to be assessed to a general district rate, under the Public Health Act, 1875, on one-fourth of its rateable value, depends on whether the allotment is arable land, or a market garden within the meaning of that Act. This is a question of law, and does also, to some extent at least, depend on the circumstances of the particular case. I believe that, in fact, in several districts allotment gardens are assessed on the reduced value.

NORTH SEA LIQUOR TRAFFIC—THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is able to state how many of the six Governments represented at the International Conference held at the Hague last June, relative to the Liquor Traffic in the North Sea, have accepted the recommendations made at that Conference; and, whether there is a near prospect of a convention being concluded on the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Five of the six Governments have accepted the Convention, and steps are being taken to obtain the completion of the Convention.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER—LEASES OF
LAND IN YORKSHIRE.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy

of Lancaster, Whether a large acreage of land, belonging to the Duchy in the North Riding of Yorkshire, is let on lease to a gentleman residing near Pickering, who sublets a number of farms thereon to various tenants at a much higher rental than that paid by him; and, if so, whether he can state the acreage so held and when the lease relating to it expires?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): There is a Duchy estate in the North Riding of Yorkshire of about 6,000 acres in lease to a gentleman residing near Pickering for a term which will expire at Lady-Day next. More than two-thirds of the property is moorland. The farms are, I believe, sublet by the lessee at a higher rental than that which he pays; but, as a large fine was paid on the lease 31 years ago, I am unable to say whether this rental is much higher, as stated in the Question.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—JURY PANEL OF CO. MONAGHAN.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the Jury Panel of the County Monaghan for this year was increased 50 per cent over that of last year; whether this increase was made by order of any Law Officer of the Crown, or by the Sheriff on his own responsibility; why was the Panel so increased; whether it is true that an Orangeman named Girvan was placed upon trial on Monday last, at the Monaghan Assizes, charged with the murder of a Catholic named Murphy; whether, when empanelling a Jury to try this man, the counsel for the Crown ordered every Catholic juror called to stand aside, and had 12 Protestants, many of whom are Orangemen, sworn to try the case; and, whether the jury so empanelled promptly acquitted Girvan?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The Jury Panel consisted of 150 names at the last Monaghan Assizes, as compared with 100 in the summer. The increase was not directed by any Law Officer; but I understand at the Summer Assizes there were complaints on the part of the Crown—there represented by the late Solicitor General—as to the attendance of jurors being insuffi-

cient, and this may have suggested to the Sheriff to enlarge the Panel. George Girvan, a Protestant, was charged with the manslaughter of a Catholic named Murphy and acquitted. The Crown Solicitor did not know the religion either of the jurors empanelled or of those directed to "stand by," nor whether any of them were Orangemen. He directed five jurors in all to "stand by," on the sole grounds that they were residents in the town were the alleged crime occurred, and might, therefore, be affected by local prejudice. Of these, he has since ascertained that two were Catholics and three Protestants. I may add that, having read the informations, I am not surprised at the verdict; nor does it, in my opinion, suggest that the jury acted in any way improperly. The prosecuting counsel were the ordinary Crown counsel upon Circuit, Mr. Kisbey, Q.C., and Mr. Shaw.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I would like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman, as he is not surprised at the acquittal, who directed the prosecution?

MR. HOLMES said, the prosecution was directed by his Predecessor; but he might add if the depositions had come before him he should have directed it also. The hon. and learned Member must be under very strange ideas as regards directing prosecutions, if he supposed the Attorney General confined himself to directing prosecutions in cases where he believed that a conviction would follow.

MR. P. O'BRIEN asked whether it was not the fact that the Grand Jury were largely composed of Orangemen?

MR. HOLMES said, the bill was found by the Grand Jury long before he became Attorney General for Ireland, and he knew nothing whatever of the circumstances. With regard to directing jurors to "stand by," he was informed by the Crown Solicitor of his intention to direct any jurors resident in Monaghan to "stand by;" and, so far as his means and his knowledge enabled him to do so, he carried that out.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CASES OF JOHN M'NULTY AND OTHERS—(THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN).

MR. KENNEDY (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Have the Government aban-

done the prosecutions in County Roscommon against John McNulty, Thomas Kenny, James Waldron, Michael Flanagan, and Andrew Flanagan, who were arrested, and returned for trial for alleged connection with the Plan of Campaign, in a house near Loughglynn; on what grounds the prosecutions have been abandoned; and, will the Crown indemnify the parties mentioned for false arrest and illegal imprisonment? The hon. Gentleman also asked, If the Government have served notice upon Mr. Jasper Tully, of *The Roscommon Herald*, in whose case the jury disagreed at the last Sligo Assizes, informing him that the Whiteboy prosecution against him has been abandoned; and, if so, for what reasons prosecution has been abandoned, and if the Crown will allow costs he incurred in defending himself?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: I have directed that the prosecutions referred to in these Questions should not be further proceeded with. I have done so in exercise of the discretion vested in me, and after full consideration of the circumstances; but I decline to discuss, in answer to a Question, the grounds on which I arrived at this decision. I deny that there was either false arrest or illegal imprisonment; and it is not the intention of the Crown to make any payment to the defendants.

POOR LAW—EMIGRATION OF CHILDREN TO CANADA.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether any emigration of children from the Poor Law unions is taking place at present; whether the alleged difficulties of inspection have been overcome; and, whether the attention of the Board has been drawn to a Report of the Privy Council of Canada, dated 27th March, 1886, alluded to by the Marquess of Lorne at an Emigration Conference held at the Colonial Exhibition on the 25th June last year, in which Report it is stated that the Canadian Government desire to make the inspection of these children a real one if proper and sufficient information were afforded?

THE PRESIDENT (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have recently received a despatch from the

Governor General of Canada forwarding a Report of the Minister of Agriculture, with which were enclosed Reports by Immigration Agents on inspections made by them of 348 orphan and deserted children who had been sent out to Canada by Boards of Guardians in this country. These Reports are generally satisfactory; and the Local Government Board are now assenting to proposals for the emigration of pauper children to Canada.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—EDUCATION SCHEMES.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether, before any scheme drawn up by the Charity Commissioners has received the approval of the Education Department, it is possible for the Beneficiaries under such scheme or charity to make representations to the Charity Commissioners with respect to such scheme, with a view of inducing the Commissioners to modify the scheme?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): On the assumption that the Question refers to schemes prepared by the Charity Commissioners under the authority of the Endowed Schools Acts, 1869, it is the duty of the Commissioners, under the provisions of Section 33 of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, to cause the draft of a scheme, or a proper abstract of it, to be published and circulated, in order that information may be given to all persons interested; and under the provisions of Section 34 Endowed Schools Act, 1869, as amended by Section 12, Endowed Schools Act, 1873, before submitting a scheme to the Education Department for approval, they are bound to receive, for a period of two months, any objections or suggestions made to them in writing respecting such scheme, whether from beneficiaries or others; and under the provision of Section 36 of the first-named Act to consider such objections or suggestions. This procedure is invariably followed by the Commissioners in the case of every such scheme.

In further reply to Mr. RANKIN,

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE said, he believed the wishes of the inhabitants of the district were always considered in framing schemes.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—ALLOWANCE TO COLLIERY PROPRIETORS.

MR. BROOKE ROBINSON (Dudley) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will take into consideration the justice of allowing colliery proprietors to receive the same deduction in their Income Tax, in respect of the depreciation of their minerals, that is now allowed by the provisions of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1878," to manufacturers and others in respect of the depreciation in their machinery?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The question of granting allowance for the depreciation of minerals is one which cannot be considered apart from that of all other property in which capital value is diminishing, such as leaseholds, terminable annuities, quarries, &c. The original Income Tax Act of 1842, Section 159, was framed on the assumption that no allowance should be made on account of diminution of capital. It is true that this principle has been so far relaxed as to allow depreciation on machinery or plant (41 *Vict. c. 15, s. 12*); but then this was a concession in favour of concerns in the nature of trade and manufacture, whereas to give the like concession to mines would be to extend it to property; and, if given, the occupiers must necessarily go further, and embrace an allowance for repairs under Schedule A. In short, the point could not be conceded without involving an entire reconstruction of the Income Tax Acts—a change which has been considered by two Select Committees of the House, and in both cases found impracticable.

ARMY—PROMOTION OF STAFF PAYMASTERS.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that staff paymasters holding the rank of Major for five years are debarred from promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel, such as is given to officers of the same rank and service in the Ordnance Store Department and Commissariat and Transport Corps, and that this hardship is all the greater because a step of rank

on retirement will no longer be given after the 31st December in the present year?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): It is impossible, within the limits of an answer to a Question, to enter into a comparison of the manner in which various Rules affect different Departments, the conditions of whose service are by no means similar. I would, however remind my hon. and gallant Friend that the Regulations embodied in the New Warrant were arrived at after the most careful and exhaustive consideration, lasting over a period of some months; and I do not think it would be advisable to alter, in any important particular, decisions thus arrived at, within three months of their publication, except in very special circumstances. But my hon. and gallant Friend will understand that I have not yet had time personally to consider the subject from all points of view.

POST OFFICE—THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION—LETTER CARRIERS.

MAJOR ROSS (Maidstone) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in consideration of the Jubilee year, he will grant additional stripes to those letter carriers who have served beyond the term for which such stripes are now given, the additional stripes to carry no increase of pay; and, whether any proportionate increase has been made in the first class letter carriers, consequent on the larger number of letter carriers now employed; and, if not, whether the Treasury have refused to make a larger grant of money to enable such increase to be made?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. and gallant Member, I have to state that it appears to me extremely doubtful whether additional good conduct stripes, carrying no additional pay, would be valued. In 1882, Mr. Fawcett proposed that the good conduct stripes should be unlimited in number, so that every postman, if only he had conducted himself well, might receive one, two, or three stripes as soon as he had served the prescribed periods. To this, however, the Treasury refused to assent. I am glad to say that a system has already come into operation under which, where the number of post-

men has been increased, the number of good conduct stripes is brought up to the same proportion.

CENTRAL ASIA — RUSSIAN RAILWAY BY THE CASPIAN SEA:

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true, as stated in *The St. James's Gazette* of the 4th instant, that a railway has been constructed by the Russian Government from the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea to Charjui, on the Oxus; that the line of the said railway approaches to within 20 miles of Sarakhs, on the Russian-Afghan Frontier; and that, at this point, a great massing of Russian troops has already taken place?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government are aware that a railway has been constructed, as stated, but it does not come within 60 miles of Sarakhs. They have no reason to believe that Russian troops have been massed in that region.

POST-OFFICE—TELEGRAPH INSPECTORSHIP AT LIVERPOOL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in the promotion to a vacant Telegraph Inspectorship at Liverpool, two qualified candidates, one a superintending engineer's senior clerk of 20 years' standing, theoretically and practically eminently fitted, the other a second class engineering clerk with 15 years' service in the Telegraph and Engineering Department, and holding first class science certificates for telegraphy, magnetism, and electricity, are to be passed over in favour of a young man who entered the Post Office Engineering Department nine months ago as temporary foreman labourer, and who has just been gazetted without examination as "a skilled telegraphist;" and, whether this is in accordance with the ordinary practice of the Department regulating such promotions?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the promotion to which he refers has not taken place; but, on a recommendation reaching me on the subject, I will give careful consider-

ation to the claims of any officers who may be concerned.

LUNACY LAWS—ALLEGED CONFINEMENT OF A SANE WOMAN.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, If he has made inquiries regarding the alleged confinement, for several years, of a woman stated to be of sound mind, and now an inmate of the Paddington Workhouse, in the Asylum at Darenth; and, what is the result?

THE PRESIDENT (MR. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have made inquiry respecting the case of the woman referred to, who was for a considerable time an inmate of the asylum of the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District at Darenth. This asylum is intended for the reception of imbecile persons of the harmless and chronic class, who do not require treatment in a lunatic asylum, and who may lawfully be retained in a workhouse. The woman was first received in May, 1880, from the parish of St. Pancras, on a certificate of the medical officer of the St. Pancras Workhouse. After two months' residence in the asylum she improved, becoming quieter and less excited in her manner, and she was discharged at her own wish. After an absence of about eight months she was again admitted on an order of the Paddington Board of Guardians with a certificate of the medical officer of the Paddington Workhouse to the effect that she was under strong delusions. She had been brought to the Paddington Workhouse by the police, who had found her in a field adjacent to Kensal Green Cemetery, where she had been wandering all night, and she was soaked in mud from head to foot. She subsequently improved, and the medical officer of the asylum states that if any friends could have given satisfactory assurances of their desire and their means to take charge of her under proper supervision and control, he would not have hesitated to discharge her from the asylum. No friends appeared to be willing to aid her; and having regard to all the issues and circumstances of the case, and to the age of the woman, he deemed it desirable that she should be retained in the asylum. The Guardians of Paddington have now undertaken the responsibility of looking

after the woman, and she has been removed from the asylum.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION —A REVIEW.

SIR HENRY FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Military Authorities have, as yet, decided on holding a Review, to celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee; and, if so, whether the Volunteer Forces will be allowed to take part in it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): A Review to celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee will be held at Aldershot, and the Volunteer Forces will have opportunity given them to take part in it.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1887-8 — FEES TO LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will cause a Return to be placed upon the Table of the House, showing what sum has been estimated and included by the Treasury in the Civil Service Estimates of 1887-8, for the payment of fees upon briefs for contentious business to Law Officers of the Crown in England, Scotland, and Ireland, over and above the official salaries provided for in these Estimates?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: It is difficult to state precisely the sum which has been included in the Civil Service Estimates for fees on contentious business to Law Officers of the Crown in England, Scotland, and Ireland over and above official salaries. The sums are included under the items of Law Charges in various Estimates, and are based upon the average of preceding years modified by the most recent experience. Perhaps it will best answer the hon. Member's purpose if I tell him the average amounts paid to each officer in the three years, 1883-4 to 1885-6, as shown by the Appropriation Account. The figures are as follows:—The Attorney General, £3,010; the Solicitor General, £2,018; the Lord Advocate, £349; the Solicitor General for Scotland, £180; the Attorney General for Ireland, £4,717; the Solicitor General for Ireland, £2,566. I may point out

that the new scale of salary for the Irish Law Officers, covering non-contentious business, came into operation with the current financial year, and under the new arrangement the fees received by them will be largely reduced. The estimate for the ensuing year makes provision for £2,000 only.

ARMY—COMMISSIONS—STANDARD OF VISUAL ACUTENESS.

SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any objections exist to a standard of visual acuteness being laid down for candidates for Commissions in the Army, on the lines sanctioned by the Secretary of State for India, for candidates for appointments in India?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Regulations have been recently laid down, after very careful consideration, for testing the sight of candidates for Commissions; and it is not, therefore, thought necessary to adopt the system to which my hon. Friend refers.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE FORTHCOMING CODE, ARTICLES 114, 109.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether it is intended in the forthcoming Code to provide any remedies for the grievances complained of by school teachers and managers, more especially as regards the following points—namely: article 114, which limits the Government grant to 17s. 6d. a head, and which has recently been more stringently applied than formerly; article 109 (Rules XII.—XVII.), which, in the opinion of many managers, are killing the teaching of drawing; and the regulations as to the allowance of grant to scholars in Standard VII.; and, when the Code will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): The Code will, I am informed, be in circulation to-morrow, when my hon. Friend will see that the payments for drawing have been placed under the control of the Science and Art Department, and will, in consequence, be entirely unaffected by, and outside the operation of, the 17s. 6d. limit. A Mi.

nute, embodying the new Regulations, which have not undergone much change, has been drawn up and was laid on the Table this afternoon.

POST OFFICE CONTRACTS—CONVEYANCE BETWEEN MULLINGAR AND BALLYMAHON.

MR. TUIITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the tenders invited and received by the Government last January for the conveyance of the mails between Mullingar and Ballymahon have as yet been considered; and, if so, when will the contractor be declared; and, whether it is the intention of the Department to accede to the wishes of the people of the district by establishing a day mail service between Mullingar and Ballymahon, as under the existing system the letters arriving by the English mail at Mullingar for Ballymahon at 9 a.m. are detained there until next morning?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The first Question of the hon. Member no doubt refers to the night mail car between Mullingar and Ballymahon. A tender for this service has just been accepted. In regard to the second question, which inquires whether a day mail service can be established between Mullingar and Ballymahon, I find that the circumstances have not altered since last summer, when the hon. Member was informed, with regret, that a day mail could not be established without incurring far greater expense than the circumstances would warrant.

IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS — THE CONFERENCE IN LONDON.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, How many Colonial Governments will be represented at the Conference summoned by the Government to meet in London in April; whether any distinction has been made between self-governing and Crown Colonies; who will be the Representatives of the Imperial Government at the Conference; where the Conference will take place, and how long it is expected to continue; and, whether the House can be informed what are the subjects to be put forward for discussion?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (SIR HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): All the Colonies under responsible Government—*i.e.*, Canada, the Australasian Colonies, the Cape, and Newfoundland, and also the Colony of Natal—will be represented. About 24 or 25 Representatives are expected. The Crown Colonies will not be specially represented, unless in any case a question should arise in reference to which any person from the Colony happening to be in England could give useful information. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, or, in his absence, the Parliamentary Under Secretary, will preside at its sittings. Other Members of Her Majesty's Government or Departmental Officers will attend if the subject under discussion renders their attendance desirable. The sittings of the Conference will be held at the Colonial Office. Most of the Colonial Representatives must return at an early date for the Sessions of their Parliaments, so that the Conference cannot continue for more than a very few weeks. The subjects proposed for consideration in Mr. Stanhope's Despatch inviting the Conference are—(1) Defence, (2) postal and telegraphic communications, (3) any other important question which, in the general opinion of the Colonial Governments, may properly and usefully be brought under consideration. Political federation is expressly excluded from discussion at the Conference.

ARMY (INDIA)—MADRAS—ARMY CLOTHING CONTRACTS.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, if his attention has been called to the fact that the Government contract in Madras, for the supply of goods to the Army Clothing Department for the year 1888-9, included the following items:—Cotton, grey, 36 inches wide, 35,778 yards; cotton, white, O R, 1,964 yards; braid, tubular, worsted, white, 10,219 yards; cord, royal, worsted, yellow, 6,167 yards; lace, worsted, scarlet, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, 7,000 yards; tape, stay, 29,333 yards; drill, Kakee (or dyed cottons), 350,000 yards; lace, worsted, white, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, 12,090 yards; tape, worsted, scarlet, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, 75,362 yards; serge, blue, 48,805 yards; serge, red, 33,299 yards; serge, scarlet, 1,806 yards; and, were the conditions of the contract such as to prohibit the manufactures of

Lancashire and Yorkshire from competition; and, if so, on what principle did the Department obtain its supplies, of high quality, and on terms most economical for the Government?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): I can add nothing to the statement I made on this subject last week. The rule of the service is fair competition between articles of Indian and European manufacture, and the Secretary of State will see this rule effectively carried out. The Secretary of State has, as I stated last week, already taken steps to inquire into the allegations of the hon. Member with reference to the order of stores in Madras.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—
THE CHALLONER SMITH COLLECTION OF MEZZOTINT ENGRAVINGS.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir THOMAS ESMONDE) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the Treasury will re-consider their refusal to purchase the Challoner Smith Collection of mezzotint engravings, to be sold on the 21st March and the following days, by Messieurs Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, for the Irish National Gallery; and, if they will consent to purchase a portion of the Collection, if they cannot see their way to granting the £10,000 to purchase the whole?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am afraid that I cannot hold out any hope that the Treasury will be able to make a grant for the purchase of the whole or of any part of Mr. Challoner Smith's Collection of mezzotint engravings.

ADMIRALTY (KINGSTOWN)—THE
GUARDSHIP "BELLEISLE."

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir THOMAS ESMONDE) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If it is the intention of the Admiralty to leave the important naval station of Kingstown without a guardship for long; and, whether any other ship will be sent there in place of the *Belleisle*?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is not intended to send another ship to Kingstown during the absence of the *Belleisle*, which will probably be for

four months, the time occupied in the annual refit and summer cruise.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND
WALES) — THE MAGISTRACY OF
FLINTSHIRE.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir THOMAS ESMONDE) (Dublin, Co., S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is a fact that 75 per cent of the inhabitants of Flintshire are Nonconformists; if it is a fact that there is not a single Dissenter among the County Magistrates; if there are no Nonconformists in the county qualified to fill the position of County Magistrate; and, if there are, what is the reason of the present state of things?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, that he was not aware that 75 per cent of the inhabitants of Flintshire were Nonconformists, and that there was not a single Dissenter among the County Magistrates. The practice of the Lord Chancellor had been to rely on the Lords Lieutenant of counties to recommend proper persons for appointment as County Magistrates. He assumed that the appointments in Flintshire had been in accordance with that practice; and it was, undoubtedly, desirable that the recommendations of the Lord Lieutenant should be based on the qualifications of individuals, without regard to their religious belief.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—COAL
MINES REGULATION BILL.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Coal Mines Regulation Bill will be delivered in sufficient time to give Members of the House an opportunity of considering it before the second reading is moved; and, whether he intends to proceed with the second reading on Monday next, when the Bill is the first Order on the Paper?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.) in reply, said, that it was not his intention to proceed with the second reading of this Bill on Monday next. He hoped that it would be printed and distributed next week. He would take care that there was ample opportunity of considering it before the second reading.

QUEEN'S PLATES (IRELAND).

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many Queen's Plates are this year allotted to the Province of Connaught; who names the places at which Queen's Plates are run; and, who advises as to where these Queen's Plates should be allotted?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: One Queen's Plate is allotted to the Province of Connaught. The Master of the Horse to Her Majesty names the places and allots the Plates, acting as regards Ireland, I believe, on the advice of the Lord Lieutenant.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS—EXAMINATIONS FOR CLERK OF WORKS UNDER THE BOARD OF WORKS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, What are the reasons for the existing disqualification of candidates desirous of attending the examinations held in London by the Civil Service Commissioners for the post of Clerk of Works under the Board of Works, who have been trained in Scotland and in Ireland; and, whether similar facilities will be afforded Irish and Scotch candidates as at present to English?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University), in reply, said, he believed it was a fact that the Civil Service Commissioners required that candidates for clerkships of works in England should have had experience in England, and that candidates for clerkships of works in Scotland should have had experience in Scotland. The hon. Baronet was, no doubt, aware that the Irish clerks of works were under a different Department. He would inquire further into the subject, and ascertain what the reasons for these regulations were.

MOZAMBIQUE—PROTECTION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS — H.M.S. "REINDEER."

MR. A. E. PEASE (York) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether H.M.S. *Reindeer* has been despatched from Zanzibar to the Portuguese Dominions at Mozambique, for the protection of British subjects

there who are suffering from the Native rising against the Portuguese authority, consequent on the withdrawal of Portuguese ships and troops; whether the *Reindeer* passed such ships and troops at Tunghi Bay, on her way down the Coast; and, whether it is a fact that these Forces had, a few days previously, attacked and bombarded property belonging to Her Majesty's British or Indian subjects, who, in common with the Sultan of Zanzibar, had put faith in the Declaration of Great Britain, France, and Germany, that the Territory on which they were settled was part of the Dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's ship *Reindeer* was sent from Zanzibar to Mozambique, in case of Her Majesty's subjects there requiring protection; but some of the Portuguese ships have now returned to Mozambique from Tunghi Bay, and the British Consul believes that the rising had been suppressed. The commander of the *Reindeer* did not report having passed any Portuguese ships. It is a fact that the Portuguese forces have captured the Sultan's posts on Tunghi Bay. It is not known whether the British Indian subjects who reside there suffered. Those residents could certainly not have established themselves there on the faith of the recent recognition of the Sultan's possession of that territory, for it could not have been known to them, and they were there previously to the visit of the Commissioners.

AFRICA (WEST COAST) — MR. H. H. JOHNSTON, HER MAJESTY'S VICE CONSUL.

MR. A. E. PEASE (York) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether H.M.S. *Rifleman* has been sent to the Rio del Rey to try and obtain the release of Mr. H. H. Johnston, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice Consul for the territories under the Protectorate of Germany in the district of the Cameroons; and, whether Mr. Johnston's seizure took place within the territory of the German Protectorate?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Consul Hewitt has proceeded on board a man-of-war to the

Rio del Rey; but it is very uncertain what has befallen Mr. Johnston.

GAME LAWS—SALE OF A HARE WITHOUT LICENCE.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is true that a greengrocer was recently fined at Liverpool for selling a hare without a licence; that the hare had been sent to him as a Christmas present, for his Christmas dinner; and that a detective, who in vain tried to persuade him to sell, succeeded, by sending a confederate disguised as a poor working man who wanted to buy a hare cheap for his sick wife; and, whether he will recommend that the fine be remitted?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was informed that there had been no allegation that the hare was sent to the man as a Christmas present. The greengrocer had been cautioned not to sell it under any pretext. Any recommendation from the magistrates who heard the case, either for a mitigation or remission of the fine, would be favourably considered.

WAR OFFICE—THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ROYAL SMALL ARMS FACTORY, ENFIELD LOCK.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether there is any foundation for the report furnished by the Exchange Telegraph Company—namely, that Colonel Arbuthnot, Superintendent of the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, will be replaced at the end of the month by Colonel King-Harman, M.P.; and, whether Colonel King-Harman, M.P., has any other qualifications than that he was many years ago a Lieutenant in the 60th Rifles, and now holds the honorary rank of Colonel in a Militia Regiment in Ireland?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No, Sir; there is no foundation for the report, which I should have thought no one would have considered serious. No appointment whatever will be made to the post about to be vacated by Colonel Arbuthnot, at the expiration of his period of service, until we have had time to consider the Report of the Earl

of Morley's Committee on the Ordnance Department. The duties of the Superintendent will be temporarily discharged by Colonel W. H. King-Harman, at present Deputy Superintendent at Birmingham.

ADMIRALTY—SALE OF CONFIDENTIAL DRAWINGS, &c., IN CHATHAM DOCKYARD.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is true, as stated in the Press, that a Mr. Young Terry, of Chatham Dockyard, has been selling confidential tracings and designs of ships of war, and confidential information generally with regard to Naval matters; whether he will state the name of the gentleman to whom such designs and information have been traced; whether, as is customary in such cases, Mr. Terry was made to take an oath of secrecy and fidelity on receiving his appointment at Chatham Dockyard; and, if so, whether the Admiralty contemplate taking steps for his prosecution; and, whether Mr. Terry has ever occupied, in any other of Her Majesty's Dockyards, a position similar to that he recently occupied in Chatham Dockyard, and when?

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Before the noble Lord answers the Question, I should like to ask him whether any official Regulations exist under which persons committing similar offences are liable to pecuniary or other penalties, in addition to mere dismissal; and, if the law does not provide for such punishment, whether the Government will introduce a Bill to deal with public offences of this nature, as in other countries?

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): May I ask if it is not true that this man was acting as temporary foreman of the Yard, and that another man was taken from another Yard and placed over him; and if it is not a fact that the Government pay large sums every day to purchase the secrets of other Powers?

THE FIRST LORD (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member (Mr. O'Brien) can hardly be serious in putting that Question. As regards the Question of my hon. Friend the Member for Preston, I should like to have Notice of it, as it is a matter of some importance, and requires consideration. The state-

ment in the remaining Question on the Paper is true. Mr. Young Terry, who was employed as draughtsman in the Chatham Dockyard, has been dismissed from Her Majesty's Service for betraying the trust reposed in him by selling information acquired by him in his official capacity. I do not think it is desirable, in the public interest, to state either the name of the person to whom the information was sold, or the objects for which it was bought. No oath of secrecy is administered in the case of draughtsmen. With the exception of three years, during which Mr. Terry was employed as assistant overseer in the manufactory of steel plates at Sheffield, he has served the whole of his time since 1871 at Chatham Dockyard.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART— THE SCHOOLS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON—SURPLUS OF EXHIBITION OF 1851.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can state how the large surplus derived from the Exhibition of 1851 has been disposed of; and, if he is prepared to lay upon the Table a statement of all sums voted by Parliament in connection with the Science and Art Schools at South Kensington, with full details of all expenditure?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The surplus was, in round figures, £180,000. It was used in the purchase of land at South Kensington to afford sites on easy terms, or free, for public buildings intended for the promotion of Science and Art. Numerous buildings have already been erected. The accounts of the Commissioners are annually sent to the Home Office. With regard to the latter part of the Question, I shall be glad to put myself in communication with the hon. Member if he will let me know precisely what are the figures which he requires.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)— THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—ACQUIT- TALS AT THE TYRONE WINTER ASSIZES.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If his attention has been drawn to the fact that it is proposed to place the two Orangemen accused of the murder of

Corporal Hughes, of the West Surrey Regiment, and Head Constable Gardiner, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the wounding of a second policeman, during the Belfast riots, upon trial before a Belfast jury in a few days; is he aware that three juries, principally composed of Protestants and Orangemen, at County Tyrone Winter Assizes, have already refused to find the prisoners guilty; has his attention been drawn to the language of Judge Lawson, on the first trial of the elder Walker, as reported in the Orange organ, *The Daily Express*, as follows:—

"Addressing the jury, his Lordship said that the case was abundantly proved, and, after briefly reminding them of the evidence, said that the facts of the case could not lead anyone to doubt that the prisoner's was the hand that fired the fatal shot. There was no possibility of reducing the case to one of manslaughter. They were bound to find him guilty of murder.

"At one o'clock the jury retired.

"At half-past 2 the jury returned into Court, and the foreman stated that they could not agree.

"Mr. Justice Lawson.—You are bound by your oath to find a verdict, and there is no question in the case or doubt at all. You will stay in there until you do find a verdict. You are bound to take the law from me. The fact has been proved before you, and there is no alternative but the one.

"The Foreman.—The jury are unanimous that they will not find a verdict of guilty on this indictment.

"Mr. Justice Lawson.—You must retire, gentlemen.

"Several jurors said it would be quite useless for them to go back.

"Mr. Justice Lawson.—You must go back; and I will keep you there until you do find a verdict. That is all I can say;"

that, notwithstanding these admonitions, the jury refused to find a verdict; that, thereupon, a second trial was ordered, but the jury again disagreed; that Judge Lawson then said—

"They must have wilfully made up their minds to disagree,"

and added—

"I told you if you believed the man fired the shot you should find him guilty, and you can't do anything else;"

that, in spite of the evidence and the Judge's directions, they persisted in disagreeing, and were discharged; that Judge Lawson declared their conduct "highly discreditable," and added—

"The juror who would violate his oath, under circumstances such as surround this case, is a man I look upon as second in guilt only to the man whose case he has been investigating;"

that the younger Walker was then placed on trial, on the same evidence, and with the same result; that the Judge refused to take a verdict of manslaughter, but the jury refused to find anything else, and were discharged, and, as these prisoners are now to be tried in the town where the riots occurred, can he say what steps are being taken to prevent a further miscarriage of justice in Belfast, where jurors largely belong to the Orange Society, and nearly all are of the same party as the prisoners; and, will he direct the Irish Law Officers to order a postponement of the trials, if the Government intend to ask Parliament for powers for changing the venue, so that the accused may be tried in some district where the influence of the Orange Society will not be paramount?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): Before my right hon. Friend answers this Question, may I ask him whether he can inform the House if either of these two Walkers belongs to the Orange organization?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have no information with regard to the Question of my hon. and gallant Friend. In answer to the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman, I have to say that the allegations contained in it are, I am informed, in part accurate and in part inaccurate; but while the prosecutions are pending I must decline to make any statement on matters which might affect the trial of the accused. The Law Officers have no power to postpone the trial of persons in custody without an order of the Court; and, when a case is in other respects ready for trial, such an order would not be made unless some grounds were shown that the case would not be fairly and impartially tried if then proceeded with. Experience has shown that very serious cases arising out of party riots in Belfast have been hitherto fairly and justly tried in the County of Antrim; and there is, therefore, no ground on which an application to postpone these trials could be based. If, during the progress of the Assizes, there seems reason for forming any other conclusion, the proper action will be taken by the Crown.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that the juries in this case were willing to bring

in a verdict of manslaughter, which was refused by the Judge, and can he give any guarantee that a similar course will be taken at the approaching trial?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. and learned Gentleman is pretty well aware I have no personal knowledge of these matters at all.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman see that in this case the jury is not packed as in the case of Girvan?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881, AND THE PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACT, 1885.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, when the supplementary Report of Mr. Knipe, and the evidence given before the Cowper Commission, will be delivered to Members?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I was about to say it would be in the hands of Members to-morrow; but I learn from the hon. Member that it is in the Library.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: I want to know when it will be delivered to Members, and when the Report of Mr. Knipe will be circulated?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The Report of Mr. Knipe will be circulated and will be in the hands of Members to-morrow, I believe. I am not able to say so positively. As to the evidence on which the Reports are based, it is already in print, and will be circulated to-morrow.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, having regard to certain passages in Mr. Knipe's published Report, he will have any objection to place in the Library a copy of the shorthand writer's notes of the evidence?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I have not seen the Report of Mr. Knipe; but if the hon. Gentleman will repeat his Question I will give him an answer.

THE IRISH LAND QUESTION—LEGISLATION.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, considering the urgent necessity that exists for dealing with the Irish Land Question by further legislation, he is

prepared to name a date when the Government Bill bearing on this subject will be introduced; and, further, having regard to the state of Public Business in this House, and the circumstance that the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has just entered upon the duties of that Office, he will consider the expediency of having the Government measure introduced into the other House of Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I think, Sir, that the hon. Gentleman is aware that Her Majesty's Government have not yet seen the evidence on which the Report of the Commission is based. Until they have seen that evidence it will not be in my power to answer the Question which the hon. Gentleman has put to me.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has it not been laid on the Table?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The evidence, I believe, is in print.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): It is in the Library.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I have not seen it.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND— LEGISLATION.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When do the Government intend to introduce the measure, referred to in the Queen's Speech, relating to the Office of Secretary for Scotland; and, whether, having regard to the disadvantage to Members of this House in the transaction of Scotch Business owing to the Secretary for Scotland being a Peer, the Government will consider the advisability of introducing in their measure a provision that the Secretary for Scotland shall always be a Member of the House of Commons?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): As soon as the state of Public Business permits, a measure relating to the Secretary for Scotland's Department, referred to in Her Majesty's Speech, will be brought before Parliament; but I cannot give the undertaking which the hon. Gentleman asks from me, as it would be most inconvenient, and altogether unusual, to introduce such a provision into any Act of Parliament.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE JURY SYSTEM—CLARE ASSIZES.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following reports of proceedings at recent Assizes in Ireland:—

"Times, Thursday, 3rd March, 1887.

"Limerick, 2nd March.

"At the Clare Assizes in a charge of assault, before a petty jury, a verdict of 'Not Guilty' was returned, although the evidence clearly pointed to the guilt of the accused, and there was virtually no defence. Mr. Justice O'Brien, addressing Mr. Murphy, Crown Solicitor, asked him to consider what course he would adopt in reference to any criminal cases remaining for trial at the Assizes. At the sitting of the Court this morning Mr. Murphy said that he had determined on not proceeding with the trial of John Dwyer, charged with shooting at a police constable. The case was accordingly postponed to next Assizes, the accused being allowed out on bail."

"Times, Wednesday, 9th March, 1887.

"Limerick, 8th March.

"At the Limerick Assizes to-day, before Mr. Justice Johnson, presiding in the County Criminal Court, Edward O'Grady and four other men were indicted for riotous assembly and assaulting the Sheriff's bailiffs on the occasion of the eviction for non-payment of rent of the first-named prisoner at Mount Minnett, near Cahirconlish, on 18th January last. Every precaution was taken by the counsel representing the Crown to insure the case having a fair trial, and a large number of jurors were ordered to "stand by." The case at length proceeded, and evidence was given showing that at the eviction O'Grady fortified his house, cut away the staircase, and offered a desperate resistance, two bailiffs being flung off a ladder, by means of which they attempted to get into the upper portion of the premises. Dirty water, the viscera of dead dogs, and other refuse were flung out on the bailiffs, and a staff was taken from a policeman by O'Grady. The prisoners were all identified by one or other of the witnesses produced by the Crown: There were no witnesses examined for the defence. The jury refused to act on the evidence offered for the Crown, and acquitted all the prisoners;

"In the case where three men were charged with riotous assembly and assaulting District Inspector Greene, at Herbertstown, the jury likewise acquitted the prisoners, although it was sworn that a crowd of some 400 people collected in the village and pelted the police with stones and mud. No witnesses were called for the defence;"

whether the jurors in each case were chiefly composed of members of the so-called National League; and, whether he will direct the Irish Law Officers to order a postponement of all cases of

agrarian outrages, intimidation, assaults upon the Constabulary, arson, or attacks on life or property, in the counties of Clare and Limerick, until the Government can obtain from Parliament powers for changing the venue, so that the accused may be tried in some district where the influence of the National League will not be paramount?

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of Order, whether the hon. and gallant Gentleman is entitled to make a Question in this House the vehicle of such an assumption as is expressed in the last few lines of the Question?

MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Gentleman will see that this is but a repetition of a Question that was asked by the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast. I did not think it necessary to interfere in that case, and I do not think it necessary to interfere now.

MR. SEXTON: I am the Member for West Belfast, and I never put such a Question.

MR. SPEAKER: I beg the hon. Member's pardon—I meant the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy.)

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to the Question of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, I have to say that I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the reports referred to; but I am in a position to say that in consequence of the failures of justice at the recent Clare and Limerick Assizes, arising from the refusal of jurors to convict in cases where the evidence was clear and practically uncontradicted, the Crown Solicitors applied that the cases remaining untried should be postponed, and an order to that effect was at once made by the Court.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he was aware that the time allowed for the Clare Assizes was quite insufficient to get through the business there; and whether the postponement of the cases referred to in the Question was not a convenience to the Crown and to the Judges, enabling the latter to open the other Assizes on the circuit at the appointed times, which would otherwise have been impossible; also, whether *The Times* report of the O'Grady case, at Limerick, is not grossly at variance with

the reports in other papers, which show that the writ in the case was not properly endorsed, which the Judge said gave rise to a serious legal question, that he would reserve if the men charged were found guilty.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware of the facts stated by the hon. Member; the information which I have received does not contain the inference in the Question. I must ask hon. Gentlemen who wish to have satisfactory answers to their Questions to be so good as to put them on the Paper.

BULGARIA—THE RECENT OUTBREAK —USE OF TORTURE ON THE CAP- TURED INSURGENTS.

LORD ELCHO (Ipswich): I have given my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs private Notice of a Question, Whether there is any foundation for the report, extensively published in Continental papers, that several persons accused of complicity in the late Bulgarian rising had been put to torture by the Bulgarian authorities?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N. E.): My noble Friend informed me of his wish to put this Question as I entered the House; but presuming that he refers to the arrest of M. Karaveloff and others detained in prison at Sofia, I do not think that I should delay to state that Her Majesty's Government heard some days ago that on the rumour of those persons having been ill-treated in prison an official inquiry was ordered by the Regents, and the officials who conducted it reported positively that none of the prisoners complained of having been beaten or otherwise ill-treated, and that the prisoners were treated with all the consideration due to their former position.

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—WITHDRAWAL OF A QUESTION FROM THE NOTICE PAPER.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. I wish to know whether I shall be in Order in referring to a Notice which was given on Monday by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) of his intention to put a Question to the Chief Secretary on Thursday, the 10th

of March. If the hon. Member is in his place I would ask him to put the Question, or if not I will read it, as it contains serious imputations on the character of the district which I have the honour to represent. If the hon. Member declines to put the Question I will ask you, Sir, to allow me to put it, and if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland is unable to give an answer to it, will you permit me to give an answer myself? I have received a telegram from the scene of the alleged outrage which purports to convey a united consensus of opinion from the priests, magistrates, and police of the district, and therefore I wish to know if I am at liberty to read the Question and also the telegram in reference to it?

MR. SPEAKER: I have not seen the Question to which the hon. gentleman refers, but as he represents the district in which an outrage is alleged to have occurred he may make a personal explanation.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: Then, in the first instance I will read the Question. It appeared on the Notice Paper of Monday, March the 7th, in the name of Mr. T. W. Russell, and it was as follows:—

"To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the following paragraph in *The Times* of the 7th instant:—

'A party of ruffians recently visited the house of a farmer in the neighbourhood of Killarney, whom they found with only his daughter in the house. The poor girl clung to her father to save him from violence, and was laid hold of by one of the miscreants who grossly insulted her and endeavoured to drag her away. The old man indignantly resisted his conduct, but another miscreant, drawing a revolver, presented it at the old man's head and threatened to shoot him if he interfered. The girl was then carried off and outraged while her father was kept in terror of his life;' whether he can say if the information conveyed in the paragraph is true; and, if any arrests have been made."

That Notice, Sir, was marked on the Paper for to-day, but to-day it does not appear on the list of Questions, nor do I find that it has been put off for a subsequent day.

MR. SPEAKER: As the Notice of the Question has been withdrawn, I shall not take any objection to the hon. Member making an explanation.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Before the hon. Member proceeds to give any answer to the Question may I be permitted to say that on reading the

paragraph which appeared in *The Times* on Monday I placed the Question on the Notice Paper. [*Cries of "Order!"*] I have risen to a point of Order.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of Order involved.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: I have received a telegram from the hon. Member for East Kerry (Mr. Sheehan), who represents the Division in which the outrage is alleged to have occurred, which is as follows:—

"Have asked police, priests, and magistrates. There is not one word of truth in it.—Sheehan."

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: With the permission of the House I may, perhaps, be allowed to state that on reading the paragraph in *The Times* of Monday I put a Notice on the Paper in order to test the accuracy of the statement. I thought it a very serious statement, and on learning yesterday that the police could get no information as to the facts, I withdrew the Question from the Paper, not wishing to give it the publicity of this House.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): May I ask whether, considering the notoriety which *The Times* has obtained for the inaccuracy of its information, any extracts from that paper will be allowed to appear on the Votes of this House in future?

[No reply.]

PARLIAMENT—THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS—WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer a Question—of which I have sent him Notice—Whether he is aware that the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury lately conveyed, through the ordinary channel, to Members of this House the information that a Parliamentary vacancy existed in the constituency of East Down; and I wish to ask whether the hon. and gallant Member (Captain Ker) applied to him for the Chiltern Hundreds, or any similar office?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): On Monday night I received an application for the Chiltern Hundreds from the hon. and gallant Member for East Down (Captain Ker). Before the warrant was issued I received a request for permission to withdraw the application, and in consequence the Chiltern Hundreds were not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE).

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £459,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, to meet additional Expenditure for Army Services.”

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Perhaps it will be for the convenience of the Committee, and may tend to simplify the discussion, if I were to offer a few observations in explanation of this Vote. The Committee will observe that a very small proportion of this Army Estimate is caused by any deficiency in the Army Votes taken last year, properly so called. The Supplementary Estimate is caused mainly by the increased demand for the Naval Service, amounting to £200,000; by a sum of £35,000 for the expenditure of the British Army in Egypt; and by £150,000 for the deficiency in the appropriation in aid, which it is necessary to explain. And here let me say, to avoid confusion, that this Estimate has no connection with the £232,000 paid for the Egyptian Army, to which reference was made the other day. That related solely to the expense of the Nile Expedition, and was based on the principle that the English Government ought to pay the expenses which the Egyptian Government would not have been liable for if there had been no Nile Expedition. But this item of £150,000 rests upon different grounds. The claim of the Egyptian Government is to be recouped for the excess of Expenditure incurred by them in respect of the Native Army. The Committee will recollect that the sum fixed as the cost of the Egyptian Native Army, as it appeared in the Convention Budget, was £130,000, which the Egyptian Government expressed their readiness to defray out of the Egyptian Exchequer, and the Egyptian Government have disclaimed all sums in excess of that amount as sums for which the English Government are liable. The details of the Expenditure are made up

in this way—£44,590 for subsidies for the relief of Kassala; £527,910 for an excess of expenditure in Egypt over and above the sum mentioned in the Egyptian Budget up to the 31st of December, 1886; and a further sum of £50,000 for an excess in the expenditure upon the Egyptian Native Army up to March, 1887—making the total sum claimed, £622,500. All through the year those claims were growing, and, as far as I can ascertain, up to the month of August in that year, no attempt was made, on the part of the English Government, to verify, check, or pay any part of the demand; but, in August, 1886, my right hon. Friend, now First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), directed an investigation by Major Ardagh. Those claims, therefore, have been investigated in the interests of the English Exchequer; and we have thought that the time has come when the English Government should consider the position in which it is placed in regard to the claims of the Egyptian Government. The principle on which the English Government have been proceeding will be best understood by reading short extracts from a despatch of Earl Granville in 1884, in which he said that Her Majesty's Government would, on their part, be prepared to assist in maintaining order in Egypt Proper, and in defending it, as well as in defending the ports of the Red Sea.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): What is the date of that despatch?

MR. E. STANHOPE: The 4th of January, 1884. It is perfectly obvious that that would impose some liability on the English Government, and the English Government have recognized that responsibility. But the liability of the English Government is not only to be measured by the words of Lord Granville, but it is also, to some extent, to be measured by the acts of that Government. There can be no doubt whatever that the English Government ordered that certain acts should be done in Egypt which fixed direct responsibility upon them. For instance, in December, 1885, two Black battalions were ordered to be raised at Suakin; and, in June, 1886, two more battalions were ordered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), who was then Secre-

tary for War, to be raised for operations on the Nile, for the relief of the English Forces which were suffering from the effects of the climate. The cost arising out of those two orders amounted to £137,000, and in addition there were certain other items of expenditure which were ordered by Sir Frederick Stephenson, the officer commanding the British Forces in Egypt. They related to some small sums, among them being a reserve of rifles, expenses in connection with the railway, and with the dépôt. Those items amounted to £37,000, the two together amounting to £174,000, or, in English money, to about £180,000. In addition to that there can, I think, be no doubt of the fact that the increase of the English Army to the extent that was effected was carried further than the Egyptian Government would have carried it if they had been left without the control of the English Government. The Committee will be pleased to hear that between January 1st and September 30th, 1886, the English Army was decreased from 18,296 to 8,718 men; but the Egyptian Army in the same time was increased from 8,023 to 13,075 men, though to a less amount than was originally proposed by Moukhtar Pasha, to which the English Government had objected. Therefore it can hardly be denied that some liability, and a considerable liability, attaches to the English Government in respect of this matter. A very considerable expenditure was imposed upon the Egyptian Government by our direct action, or, to speak in the words of the Vote itself, "under the authority of the British Commander-in-Chief." Accordingly it became the duty of Her Majesty's Government to consider the question of that liability from all points of view. The House will recollect that, as I have stated, the total amount of the claims of the Egyptian Government in respect of the Egyptian Army Expenditure amounts to £622,500. Now what Her Majesty's Government, after carefully considering the matter, have agreed to do is this. They have already asked Parliament to Vote in the Army Estimates the sum of £58,000 in respect of Suakin, and they have now agreed to forego £200,000, which is the contribution due by the Egyptian Government for the year 1886-7 in respect of the Army of Occupation. The whole of the expenditure which remains

to be paid in respect of the Native Army will be paid by the Egyptian Government, and the whole of the future expenditure of Egypt in respect of the Native Army will be paid out of the Egyptian Exchequer. The Committee will see that this arrangement has not been placed upon any precise or very exact definition of the respective responsibilities of the two Governments, simply because it is absolutely impossible to draw an exact line between the responsibility of England and the responsibility of Egypt. It would be very easy to attack it from either point of view; it would be easy to make out a case to show that the Egyptian Government have not, perhaps, received all that it might expect to receive; and, on the other hand, it would not be difficult to establish that the Egyptian Government has received more than the country ought to contribute. But it seems to the Government to be essential to bring this matter to an issue as soon as possible in the interests of our position in Egypt, and also because it is right to bring at once to the knowledge of the House of Commons the position in which this country stands with regard to the claims of the Egyptian Government. In any case, it is important that any arrangement come to as between the English and the Egyptian Exchequers should be accepted as a final settlement of all the out-standing claims of the Egyptian Government. There remains one thing more to explain to the Committee; I have referred to the sum of £200,000, which was the contribution to be paid by Egypt. The sum the Government now ask the Committee to Vote in this Supplementary Estimate is limited to £150,000, and that arises from the fact that there has been a saving upon other Army Votes passed for the year 1886-7. There is a small additional Estimate in the Navy Supplementary Estimate; but I hope it will be found convenient to the Committee to discuss and decide the whole question now, once for all, without the necessity of raising it again upon the Supplementary Estimate for the Navy.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I have to thank the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) for having vouchsafed an explanation of this Vote. If we are to assume that the British taxpayer is

bound to pay the whole of the expenses for defending Egypt, then the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman are perfectly good; but I am bound to say that I do not accept the argument of the right hon. Gentleman, because I entirely and absolutely deny the very foundation of the whole of his statement—namely, that the British taxpayer has any right to pay for the defence of Egypt. I have certainly not been convinced by the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman; and I propose to move to reduce the amount of the Vote by £150,000, that being the contribution we are asked to pay on behalf of Egypt. This is a very serious matter, and more especially serious when we know that up to this time this country has been left in entire ignorance of the extent to which the British taxpayers have been paying for assisting the Egyptian Government to defend their own territory. I will not go over again the arguments which were used the other night; but, at the same time, I think the Vote raises very serious questions indeed, not only as to expenditure, but questions of policy, and a very important question as to the Treasury management and control over our expenditure, and the extent to which the House of Commons is permitted to have control over it. The first complaint I have to make is a somewhat general complaint as to the way in which these Supplementary Estimates are rushed through the House. I find that the Ordinary Estimates are weeded from every questionable kind of expenditure, and then at the end of 12 months we are told that there are Supplementary Estimates, which the law has provided must be passed by a certain day. We are told that the money has been spent, and that we have no option in the matter. The right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to give us an explanation with regard to this Vote, but it is not an explanation which hon. Members have had an opportunity of considering; and I can only say that up to this time, the Committee, who are now required to vote the money, have not been in possession of the slightest amount of information in the matter. In my opinion, the sum we are now asked to vote, and other sums in addition, are really in the nature of subsidies to the Egyptian Government without the knowledge or consent of Parliament. The right hon.

Gentleman has told us that this Vote is not in connection with an item of expenditure amounting to £232,900, to which allusion was made the other night; but if it is not directly connected with that Vote, at all events it presents a close relation to it, and the two together may be regarded as twin brothers. We employed an English Commander-in-Chief upon the Expedition that was sent out to relieve General Gordon, and a part of this expenditure was incurred in those operations. A further portion of the Estimate is for the extra expense incurred by the Egyptian Army owing to our operations for the defence of the frontier. We were told the other night that in settling accounts with the Egyptian Government a sum of £233,000 had already been paid without the consent of Parliament; and now it is proposed to add the sums included in this Estimate to the amount already paid. It seems to me that we really have been giving a large subsidy to the Egyptian Government; in fact, we seem to have already paid a sum amounting to close upon £400,000 without the knowledge of Parliament. As to the Suakin Vote, there may be something to be said for it. Lord Granville undoubtedly did use words which may be said to have given sanction to the impression that we were to hold that port on our own account. But there are many other items which, in my opinion, would be more properly defrayed by the Egyptian Government, and I do not see why we should, with this Vote, be practically asked to sanction the expenditure of £500,000 of money in order to subsidize Egypt. We are told that it is for past expenditure, and not for future expenditure; and I should be very glad to find that we are not called upon to make any further expenditure. But I do not feel confident in that assurance, when I know that at the last moment Supplementary Estimates may be brought forward, and when I am not sure that the expenditure we are asked to pass is in the nature of a final Vote, but of a subsidy which we are asked to give to Egypt in order to square the Egyptian account and to avoid that inquiry into the finances of Egypt which we are bound by Treaty in certain contingencies to submit to, and which must inevitably come some day. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken as if the late Government were responsible for the present arrangement. I am one

of those who are disposed to think that both Governments have made away unfairly with the money of the taxpayers of this country, and, therefore, I am prepared to cast blame on both. But when I look at the Papers what do I find? I do not find that there is any justification whatever for the charge of the right hon. Gentleman; but that Her Majesty's Government are making payments upon a policy directly the reverse of that of the previous Government. What did the right hon. Gentleman quote in support of his contention? Nothing but a despatch of Lord Granville as long ago as 1884, which contains an allusion which may to a certain extent be said to justify some expenditure in connection with Suakin. But that is all. It is perfectly clear that this does not justify the action of the present Government. As bearing upon the general question of financial management, I would advise all hon. Members who take an interest in economy and in the interests of the British taxpayer, to read the Report of the Auditor and Comptroller General upon the Appropriation Accounts in connection with the Egyptian Army for the year 1885-6. It seems to me that that Report is very unpleasant reading. The Comptroller and Auditor General is an important officer of the State. He stands in relation to Her Majesty's Treasury in the same position as the Supreme Court of the United States stands towards the United States Government, in so far as he is bound to control and correct abuses on the part of the Government. But I am sorry to say that we have had Reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General which do not appear to have had the slightest attention paid to them. If hon. Members will take the trouble of looking up these Reports, they will find that they contain allusions to some very serious matters. I find that the Comptroller and Auditor General takes the strongest exception against the improper mode in which the accounts are presented in order that expenditure may be thrown on the Vote of Credit. He says—

“No less an amount than £872,300 was added to the Vote of Credit expenditure over and above the sum recorded against it in the Accounting Department of the War Office, and the accounts of Vote of Credit expenditure compiled in this manner show that the additional charges thrown on the Vote of Credit closely correspond with the deficiencies shown on the ordinary

Votes, the Vote of Credit being practically used to adjust the differences between the ordinary Vote and the actual expenditure.”

Now, it appears to me that that is a very serious statement indeed. We were always in the habit of supposing that Votes which were not expended in the year for which they were voted, were paid into the Exchequer at the end of the year. In the last Report we have from the Comptroller and Auditor General on this subject, a sum of £232,000 has been appropriated which was not properly chargeable to the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter to which the hon. Member is calling attention is, no doubt, one of great importance; but I fail to see how he connects it with this Supplementary Vote.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I will not pursue that line of argument further. I will only say that these Votes are closely connected together. It would appear that Her Majesty's Government have, without the knowledge of Parliament, paid large sums of money, and we are now called upon to pay the balance. I will, Sir, after your intimation, avoid all further allusion to the subject. I must, however, be permitted to say that all who are interested in the control over our finances must be alarmed by the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General in regard to the Egyptian Expenditure now brought before the Committee. It appears to me that in this matter we have not only a lax system, but also a further illustration of the evil complained of the other night, that excesses upon the Votes are not paid into the Exchequer, but kept in hand in order that they may be applied to other expenditure which may arise, and which, as a necessary consequence, the House is not called upon to sanction. I trust, whether it be in regard to this Vote or not, other hon. Members will closely apply themselves to the consideration of this subject, because I believe that we do not know the worst of the matter. The Treasury has hitherto been supposed to be the guardian of the public purse, but it would appear that the principal blame now attaches to it. I cannot imagine that this sort of thing could have taken place under the *régime* of the present First Lord of the Treasury, or under the present Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it certainly does raise very serious questions indeed. And now, Sir, to

revert to the Egyptian Question. It seems to me that there has been going on for some time a sort of conspiracy among the financiers and Jingoës in Egypt—a sort of conspiracy among those who are anxious for the British Government to remain in the country—to force the hands of Her Majesty's Government, and to throw on the British taxpayers any deficiencies in the accounts of Egypt. This has been foreshadowed for some time, and now the whole truth is sprung upon us in this Supplementary Estimate. This is not a proper way of treating the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the pretext for this expenditure is that services have been rendered by the Egyptian Army to the British Army. Now, I entirely and absolutely repudiate that argument, because I deny that the British taxpayer is in any way responsible for the defence of Egypt. We know as to one part of the expenditure that it was for the relief of the late lamented General Gordon. But General Gordon went out as an Egyptian Commissioner, and he acted in that capacity in order to rescue from the Soudan Egyptian troops and Egyptian subjects; that was the object of his expedition. The other operations undertaken by the British Forces were for the protection of the Egyptian Frontier, and in carrying out that object extensive operations were rendered necessary. Combined operations were carried on by the Egyptian Army and the British Army under a British Commander-in-Chief. But I fail to see why, because we went there to rescue Egyptian subjects, and to provide for the defence of the Egyptian frontier under the British Commander-in-Chief, the British taxpayer is to bear the expense. It is most ludicrous, as well as most unjust and unreasonable, that we should be called upon to pay the Egyptians for fighting the battles that are necessary for the defence of their own country. It was not the case of employing an Egyptian Army to assist us. On the contrary, the fact was just the other way. I find that in 1886 Lord Rosebery, on behalf of the then Government, distinctly refused the appeal which was made to him to pay this sum of £200,000. Lord Rosebery, on the 14th of April, 1886, said that the sum—

“Will be met from the sum allotted out of the guaranteed loan for special expenses connected with the Soudan.”

And he goes on to say—

“It would be unreasonable to expect Her Majesty's Government to renounce altogether the payment of the £200,000. The British Government pay Custom duties, octroi duties, and other charges. The total yearly cost to this country for the occupation and defence of Egypt exceeds £1,000,000.”

That sum was altogether beyond the ordinary expenditure for the troops employed in Egypt. It would, therefore, seem clear from this Paper that Lord Rosebery, in defining the position of the late Government in 1886, pointed out good reasons why the payment should not be made. It was even the case that the Egyptian Government did not make the claim. At the time the loan of £9,000,000 was raised, a considerable amount was reserved to meet the expenditure of carrying on the Egyptian Government. It was proposed that the £200,000 should be provided out of that loan and not by the ordinary finances of the country. Then came the proposition of Moukhtar Pasha, in February, 1886; and later on—in October 1886—the present Government being then in power, they accepted the liability. Now it appears to me that they wrongfully accepted it, and that they accepted it wholly under pressure, having regard to the depressed condition of the Egyptian finances. I believe that the only real ground on which this payment can be claimed is that of the necessities of the Egyptian Government, and it comes to this—that the Egyptian Government cannot pay, and, therefore, we must pay. That is the only real ground on which we are asked to pay this money; but it seems to me that the gentlemen who have been at the head of Egyptian finance have been occupying a sort of dual capacity in the matter. One day they give us a roseate view of the Egyptian finances, and tell us they are in a flourishing condition. Nothing could be more rose-coloured than the account which they gave some time ago when they wanted to pay the bondholders. When, however, it comes to be a question of the settlement of accounts with the British Government an entirely different view is taken of the finances of the country.

Sir George Campbell

They say that Egypt is poor; that her finances are embarrassed; that the Egyptian Exchequer is unable to pay; and the consequence is that this country is compelled to pay a large amount of money, not only on account of past expenditure, but as regards the present position of affairs. The right hon. Gentleman has indicated, and we knew it already from the statements of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that at one time it was proposed we should pay a great deal more. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, in addition to the responsibility incurred, it was proposed to take another £500,000 as a subsidy for Egypt. Here are his words—

“When I was leaving the Government, I had consented there should be presented to Parliament Supplementary Estimates amounting to the sum of £300,000 for the Navy, close upon £500,000 for the Army, and another £500,000 for expenses connected with the Army in Egypt.”—(3 *Hansard*, [310] 59.)

Can there be anything plainer than this? I myself heard the noble Lord the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) use those words in the plainest language. What I believe is this—that Her Majesty's Government have become afraid of the outcry which may be raised in this country, and they have cut down the Estimate to £150,000. They say, under these circumstances, instead of finding fault with them, you ought to give them a great deal of credit. Now, whether the amount is smaller than it might have been or not, it is certainly a great deal too large for the British taxpayer to pay; and I am not satisfied that if he agrees to pay it now, he will not have further demands of the same kind to pay in the future. The investigation which the Egyptian Government and Her Majesty's Government wish to avoid is postponed for the present, and if there is a deficiency next year we shall have to meet it also by a Supplementary Estimate. Her Majesty's Government may say, “hit high, or hit low, there is no pleasing him.” Now, I should be much better pleased if they would now ask something more for next year, for this reason—that if we are to defend Egypt out of British taxes, it will be much better to pay Egyptians for doing the work than to keep our own troops. Why should our British Gren-

diers be required to leave their bones in Egypt? I never struggled much against the payment for Suakin. That port is a long way from Egypt, and if Her Majesty's Government desire to indulge in the crotchet of occupying Suakin, they may fairly bear the expense; but when it comes to a question of paying for the defence of Egypt, I very strongly object to it. At the same time, if I were able to believe that the expenditure was incurred in order to enable Egypt to obtain an efficient Army and secure the withdrawal of our troops altogether from that country, I would not grudge the money. But the reason why I do most strongly object to the Vote is that I believe it to be a Vote which is only to stave off the financial difficulties of Egypt, and to put off financial inquiry. I understand that the Egyptian Army, instead of being strengthened, is being reduced, and that it will be still further reduced. The answer to those who may urge the evacuation will be that we cannot leave Egypt because the Army is too weak. It seems to me that the first condition under which it may be possible for us to withdraw our troops from Egypt is that Egypt should have a sufficient standing Army, by means of which she shall be able to defend herself against the wild tribes by which she is surrounded. I have great respect for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. I believe that he has done good service on former occasions, and he has led all of us to hope that he was going to do good service again. If Sir Henry Drummond Wolff could secure what it has been alleged he has been attempting—namely, the neutralization of Egypt, no salary would be too large for him. Certainly, if by the neutralization of Egypt is meant “hands off all round,” that would be one of the best things that could happen, and I should have been delighted if Sir Henry Drummond Wolff could have made an arrangement of that kind. But whatever may have been the desire in that direction on the part of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, I am afraid that Her Majesty's Government have yielded to the Jingo cry. They gave an explanation the other day which shows that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission has been entirely nugatory. What did they tell us? They told us that the proposals of Her Majesty's Government did not involve the withdrawal of our troops so long as there is any apprehen-

sion that the Government will not be able to maintain themselves; and that means until the arrival of the Millennium. No doubt the Egyptian bondholders will be highly satisfied with that announcement; and, at all events, it is now understood that we are not to go away until the Egyptian Army is rendered efficient. We are not now going to give the money by which it can be made efficient. Her Majesty's Government say that they have never made any proposal by which they intend to renounce their right to protect the security of Egypt from external and internal disturbance. I ask where Her Majesty's Government got that right? I deny the right altogether. Her Majesty's ships went to Alexandria, and our troops have ever since been engaged in defending Egypt; but I deny altogether that they are acting under any Treaty right to which the European Powers or the Porte has consented, and which gives them any such power. Egypt has submitted to the protection of Her Majesty's Government; but the Khedive has given them no Treaty right, because he dare not do so. Then they say that they appreciate the fact that Belgium is not like Egypt. Undoubtedly, in many respects Egypt is not like Belgium; but in one essential point it is like Belgium—namely, that it is a rich country which so many people covet, and the neutralization of Belgium means “hands off all round.” Nobody must be allowed to take possession of the country; but the people of the country must be allowed to manage their own affairs. I think there would be very little hope if we passed this Vote that things would go in the right direction, or that there would be any immediate prospect of our withdrawing from Egypt and wiping our hands of the Government of that country. I think it is a very bad arrangement which enables the Egyptian financiers to extort the utmost farthing from the people of England for the benefit of the bondholders without benefiting the people of Egypt in the least degree. It is stated that the Army Service in Egypt is popular; but I find that a revenue of £250,000 a-year is being raised for the purchase of discharge. Surely, that is grossly inconsistent with the statement that service in the Egyptian Army is popular; that nothing like conscription is required, and that the service is entirely voluntary. It has been said both

in the English and French newspapers that the French Government have consented to devote the money obtained from the purchase of discharges to the Egyptian Army, the effect of which would be to relieve the taxpayers of this country. The Government of Egypt, however, declined to do anything of the sort because they wanted to keep this item of revenue for other purposes. Nobody has taken a stronger view than I do as to the necessity of abolishing the *corvée*, and the land revenues ought to be available for that purpose; but I fail to see that the *corvée* in Egypt has any connection whatever with the service of the Army. It would be just as reasonable if the hon. Members for Caithness (Dr. Clark) and Ross and Cromarty (Dr. Macdonald) were to get up and object to the Army Estimates, because they are of opinion that the sum voted to the purchase of discharge ought to be applied in order to meet the grievances of the Scotch crofters. The two things have no reference to each other. According to the last plea put forward, as stated on the authority of our own Agent in Egypt, the arrangement is this. At the time of the Financial Convention the land revenue of Egypt was to be reduced to the extent of £250,000, and it was now proposed that it should be maintained, but that provision should be made out of that for the abolition of the *corvée*. In that event, provision for the Army could be made; but, otherwise, there would be no funds out of which the Egyptian Army could be maintained. If that is so, we should be fairly told that after a certain time the British taxpayer should no longer be required to contribute towards the support of the Egyptian Army. There may be people in this country who are willing to pay for the privilege of occupying Egypt; but I do not think that if the matter were fairly and frankly placed before the English people, they would be willing to make this payment. My own view is that if the Egyptian Government cannot be supported under the present system without coming to the British taxpayer to make up the deficiency, we ought frankly to confess that Egypt is insolvent, and then endeavour to come to terms with the other Powers in regard to its future position. I think we are making an unfair payment, upon an unfair pretext, when we pay the Egyptians for fighting their own battles, and

that this item in the Supplementary Estimates is solely asked for with a view of squaring the Egyptian Budget. Before I sit down, I should like to express a hope that, before the debate ends, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, or some other Member of the Government, will explain how it is proposed to carry on the expenditure for the Egyptian Army, if this House is not called upon to pay it. I understand that in the coming Estimates there is not only no Estimate for any payment to be made in aid of the Egyptian Army, but that even the payment for the garrison at Suakin is to be withdrawn. Then I want to know how the Egyptian Army is to be carried on if that is the case? I find that the Egyptian Army has always been starved. The £130,000, which was reserved for it in Egypt, does not amount to one and a-half per cent of the Egyptian revenues. Is it possible that any country could expect to maintain a standing Army at so ridiculously small a cost? And even £30,000 of that sum is expended in administration, and instead of £130,000 being kept for the maintenance of the Army, not more than £100,000 is spent for that purpose. How, then, is the money to be found to enable this country to abandon the position which it now occupies in Egypt? Are you going to reduce the Egyptian Army to the minimum on which it can be maintained for £130,000? I expect to be told what proposals Her Majesty's Government intend to make in regard to the Egyptian Army in the future, and how it is to be maintained if the cost is not to be thrown upon the British taxpayer. Nothing could be more dangerous than the false economy of starving the Egyptian Army, and reducing its efficiency. I am sorry that I have detained the House so long, and I beg to move the rejection of the Vote.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): There is a point of Order I wish to raise in regard to the Motion the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has moved for the rejection of this Vote. I take it that if a reduction of the Vote is merely moved there is nothing to prevent any other hon. Member from raising a question hereafter upon other items in the Vote, even although the Motion for the reduction of a particular item is put from the Chair and carried to a Division. Therefore, I would suggest that the hon.

Member, instead of moving the rejection of the Vote, should move the omission of the particular item which relates to Egypt. The debate would then be confined to that specific item. There would be no cross conversation, but a specific issue would be raised.

THE CHAIRMAN: That course was pursued on several occasions the last time we were in Supply.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I shall be perfectly willing to change the form of my Motion, and to move the omission of this item of £150,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £150,000, for deficiency in Appropriations in Aid, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(Sir George Campbell.)

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The audacity of putting down a Vote like this in the Supplementary Estimates is only equalled by the audacity of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) in endeavouring to throw the responsibility upon his Predecessors. Now, Sir, what is this Vote? It is a deliberate attempt on the part of certain classes, who always hang together, to force the British taxpayer to pay a sum of £200,000 which cannot be paid by Egypt for the coupons on the British Loan that are due in March—this month. In order to prove that assertion, it will be necessary for me to explain, as briefly as possible, what are our present relations with Egyptian finance. After 1882—after what was called the rebellion had been suppressed—we came to an agreement that the Egyptian Government should pay a sum of £4 for every one of our soldiers employed in Egypt; that being supposed to be the excess of cost over what would have been incurred if the troops had remained in England. The number of our troops was limited, at the same time, to 7,500. In 1884 a Convention sat in London and discussed this matter at some length, but separated without coming to an absolute agreement; but in March, 1885, they did come to an agreement, and their agreement was embodied in a decree of the Khedive. In that decree it was laid down that the Khedive should take 5 per cent off the coupons for the years 1885, 1886, and up to March, 1887. At the same time, it was agreed that we should reduce our interest in the Suez

Canal shares by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Whether that was a *quid pro quo* I do not know; but it was stated at the time that the great Powers of Europe were acting with us, and assented that the maximum sum to be paid for the occupation of Egypt was to be £200,000. We are told that this Vote has been rendered necessary in consequence of what the late Government did in the matter. Let us see what it was that the late Government did. In the Blue Book, "Egypt, No. 4," at page 78, there is a Treasury Minute, dated September, 1884. That Treasury Minute cites a speech made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. My right hon. Friend stated then—

"All the Powers agree as to the normal administrative expenditure in Egypt, fixing the figure, subject to certain adjustments, at £5,237,000, but that figure contains one item of expenditure which will be of special interest to us—namely, £200,000 for the maximum cost of the Army of Occupation."

The Treasury Minute goes on to say that, in pursuance of that arrangement, made by Her Majesty's late Advisers, the liability of this country in respect of the Army of Occupation was, for that year, £200,000. Therefore, the sum due from Egypt on that occasion for the first five months of 1885-6 was £83,333. Now, I have pointed out what was the view of the matter taken by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Member for Edinburgh. In 1885-6 this amount was charged on the Estimates, and it appears as a reduction of the Estimates. We were to receive £200,000 from Egypt, and I believe that we did receive it. At the same time, the Egyptians received £233,000 as a contribution from us for services paid for by them in connection with our Suakin expedition, which was intended for the relief of General Gordon. It was held that that was specially our expedition, and it was considered that we ought to pay any Egyptians we employed in it. I now come to 1886-7. In 1886-7, I find there is put down in the Estimates a sum of £200,000 as a contribution from Egypt. It was on that occasion that Lord Rosebery wrote the despatch which was quoted just now by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), in which, in reply to the demand from Egypt, and the plea

which the Egyptian Government had made for some remission, Lord Rosebery substantially told them that no remission whatever would be made. [*Cries of "No!"*] Hon. Members say "no." Then I shall have to read the despatch again. It is dated April 14th, 1886, and it is a despatch from Lord Rosebery to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and it says—

"I should wish you to point out to His Excellency that it would be unreasonable to expect that Her Majesty's Government could consent to renounce altogether the payment of the £200,000."

[An hon. Member: Altogether!] The hon. Gentleman opposite relies on the word "altogether." Surely we are renouncing this £200,000 altogether. The despatch says—

"It would be unreasonable to expect that Her Majesty's Government could consent to renounce altogether the payment of the £200,000 to be paid by the Egyptian Government on account of the expenses of the British forces in Egypt. A payment of this kind was originally intended to represent the extra cost of the residence in Egypt of British troops in India over and above their actual pay. Her Majesty's Government, while considering the straitened position of the Egyptian Exchequer, cannot recognize that this sum covers even the extra expenditure the British Government are called upon to pay. They pay customs duties, octroi duties, and other charges. The total yearly cost to this country for the occupation and defence of Egypt exceeds £1,000,000 sterling. It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government to reduce this charge as far as possible; but whilst it continues they are not prepared, without just reason, to remit the small contribution towards it they receive from Egypt."

After that despatch, can it be possible to assert, for a moment, that Her Majesty's late Advisers were in favour of relieving Egypt of the payment of this sum? As I have pointed out, these coupons, at the present moment, are due by the Convention of 1885, at which it was agreed that, in March, 1887—the present month—Egypt was to pay the interest upon the coupons in full, or the whole condition of the finances of Egypt would be inquired into by the European Powers. I can understand the Government coming forward to say—"We object to a Convention of that kind on the part of Europe; and we think it is more desirable that we should give up this sum of £200,000." That course would be frank and honest; but what did the Government do? After taking credit to themselves for this £200,000 in

the Estimates, they come forward with a Supplementary Estimate, precisely at the moment when the money due upon these coupons is required, and when it is a matter of notoriety, according to Sir Evelyn Baring, that Egypt cannot pay them. Her Majesty's Government told us that they wanted this sum of money in order to pay off some old claims in regard to Suakin; but in reality it is to pay the coupons. Are we to be told that we have done nothing at all for Egypt? We sent an army there, and charged only £4 per man, while the cost to us was £100 per man. Therefore, we saved the Egyptian Government a large amount of ready money. Yet, now, we are told that we are not only to send our own troops to Egypt, but that we are to pay the Egyptians for defending their own country. Whoever heard of such a preposterous demand? It has frequently occurred that one Government has sent to another an Auxiliary Force under a Treaty of defensive and offensive alliance. A Government sending an Auxiliary Force in that way is expected to pay for it; but it has never yet been held that a Government who sends an Auxiliary Force is not only to pay its own expenses, but also the expenses of the Native troops who may act with them. Yet that is what the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War is obliged to lay before the House, because he will not frankly and honestly admit that this is a payment for the coupons. Let me point out that if we pay these coupons, in all probability we shall have to pay more money still. We shall virtually admit that whenever the coupons cannot be paid by Egypt we must come forward and pay them ourselves. It practically makes it an Egyptian security in English Consols. No doubt, that is a pleasant thing for the holders of the coupons; but it is most unpleasant for the British taxpayer, who will again and again have to put his hands into his pockets in order to pay these coupons. The reason of this is, that we have taken upon ourselves the payment of the loans to Egypt, at an excessive rate, and we have not left enough for the normal expenses of Egypt. Owing to the old Soudan troubles on the Frontier of Egypt, the Egyptian Government were compelled to raise a loan which was greater than they could repay. We authorized and

allowed that loan, and guaranteed the payment of interest upon a sum of £9,000,000. At the present moment Egypt is in this position. Avowedly she cannot borrow on her own finances, and, therefore, she comes springing upon us for the money necessary for the payment of her debts. I maintain that the course we are pursuing is corrupt in the highest degree. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) will give the House an explanation in regard to these loans. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for them. I do not complain of him; but I will only state an admitted fact, that the house with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was connected brought out the first loans; and now he puts his name to this Estimate, which is to convert these bonds into English Consols and to give a perfect assurance that if they are not paid by Egypt—which certainly cannot be done, and they cannot in any way benefit the Egyptian fellahs, but simply benefit the men who have bought the loans, and now hold the coupons at a high price—then the money shall be paid by the British Government. Let me call attention to a statement made by Sir Evelyn Baring—who will be accepted, I presume, by the Government as a good authority—as to what the position of Egypt has been up to 1887. Sir Evelyn Baring tells us that when the financial arrangements were made in 1885, the Government ought to have known very well that Egypt would be unable to pay the full interest on the coupons. Sir Evelyn Baring wrote, on the 18th of April, 1886, to Lord Rosebery, and stated that there was a probability of the Egyptian Government being able to resume full payment in 1887; but at that moment, adds Sir Evelyn Baring, it would be undue optimism to speak of the contingency as more than a bare probability. He adds—

“That the sum required to enable the Egyptian Government to meet its full legal obligations was only about £200,000;”

and he sums up the position as follows:—

“The full payment of the rate of interest is quite impossible unless two things happen—first, a material reduction of the army expenditure; and secondly, a reduction of the non-effective charges.”

He concludes in these words—

"Unless these two objects are obtained, I see no probability of the Egyptian Treasury issuing from a state of bankruptcy."

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the date of that despatch?

MR. LABOUCHERE: It is contained in the Blue Book, "Egypt, No. 4." Sir Evelyn Baring clearly shows that it was impossible for the Government to meet these charges. As a matter of fact, the Egyptian Government has not met them, and cannot meet them; and, therefore, I say that this scheme is vamped up, and we are called upon to pay expenses, stated to have been incurred in 1885-6, in order that the coupons may be paid in full. Would it not have been more fair and candid for Her Majesty's Government to have said so? No doubt I should have personally opposed any proposal of that kind; but still, the matter would have been put fairly before the House. I maintain that it is the duty of the House to put an end to this ridiculous expenditure in connection with Egypt. We were told when we were voting money for the Army of Occupation that £200,000 would be paid over by Egypt; but, after voting money upon that pledge, we are now called upon, in a Supplementary Vote, to forego the £200,000 and put our hands in our own pockets in order to pay it. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War has further told us that some of the other items in connection with the war expenditure have been in excess of the sums actually required. He has, therefore, coolly taken £50,000 which was in excess upon sums voted for specific purposes and he has handed them over as a subsidy to the Egyptian Government.

MR. E. STANHOPE: What I stated was that the balance of the deficiency in the Appropriation was £150,000.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the original appropriation exceeded the Estimates by £150,000, but that there was an excess of £50,000 which he had appropriated. That is the necessary consequence of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I believe I am speaking within the mark when I gather the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman's words to be that there was a considerable excess upon other items, and that that excess has been deliberately taken

by Her Majesty's Government. I am not surprised that a Government who would do that should come forward now and ask for a further sum of £150,000; but, I would ask, what earthly use it is for hon. Members to come down here to discuss the various items of expenditure when such things as that are allowed? It is a system that in the time of the late Emperor Napoleon was protested against over and over again, and it was one of the things that in the end led to the Emperor's downfall. I protest entirely against the whole of this Vote. I protest against the £150,000 which we are asked to Vote; and I protest as strongly as possible against the system adopted at the War Office by which a sum of £50,000 voted for specific purposes is proposed to be put into the pockets of the Egyptian Government, because the present Government choose to say that the late Administration were in favour of such a course. I deny that they were in favour of it. I deny that the quotation from Lord Granville substantiates it for a moment. The right hon. Gentleman, in 1887, tells that this debt was incurred in 1885-6; and he says that it was incurred in accordance with the wishes and intentions of the late Government, because, in 1884, Lord Granville had asserted that it was our mission to maintain order in Egypt, and to perform certain duties in connection with the ports of the Red Sea. Now, we are spending £1,000,000 sterling in the defence of the Egyptian Frontier, and we have spent a great deal of the money in maintaining the ports of the Red Sea; and Lord Granville's statement has absolutely nothing to do with an expenditure which occurred in 1885-6, and which we are now asked to pay in 1887. I protest altogether against this Vote, and I hope my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy will go to a Division against it. I hope that hon. Members on this side of the House, at least, will join by their votes in giving an effect to a strong protest against the whole system of the Government in bringing forward Votes of this character in Supplementary Estimates. Above all things, we ought to protest against the system which has been pursued of taking £50,000 from purposes for which they may have been legitimately and properly voted, in order to apply them to other and entirely different purposes.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): As I understand the Vote, it is an application to the Committee to grant, without knowing any of the particulars, a sum of £150,000 to the Egyptian Government for the expenses which are being, and have been, incurred by them—how incurred is altogether unexplained—under the authority of one of the British Commanders-in-Chief. We do not know when the expenditure was incurred. [Mr. E. STANHOPE dissented.] I am sorry to find myself already in disagreement with the Treasury Bench; but I am afraid I shall find myself more in disagreement as I go on. I have some little evidence beside me which I am ready to use after I get an answer from the Government to the questions I am about to put. At present, all I am going to ask is that some Member of the Government, possessing a little knowledge of the facts, will be good enough to state what was the nature of the extraordinary services rendered to us by the Egyptian Government, and who authorized the British Commander-in-Chief to require the Egyptian Government to perform these services? I wish to know whether the question was submitted to the Home Government, and, if the reply is "Yes," where is the despatch relating to it? If the question was not so submitted, I want to know whether the Government mean to give us to understand that the British Commander-in-Chief, for the time being, has authority to pledge the Government of this country to the payment of any amount of money to the Egyptian Government for any expenditure they may choose to incur? Then I want a specific answer to the question—what is the total extraordinary expenditure of which this sum of £150,000 forms part? I want to know, further, what the items are which make it up; also, whether those items have been submitted to the Home Government in any despatch, and, if "Yes," why that despatch has been omitted from the papers presented to Parliament? I want to know whether the Vote includes anything for services at Suakin in reference to which a disagreement even now subsists, and it becomes more important to-night because it is alleged in regard to the matter that the British Government did, by a despatch to the Commander-in-chief, authorize certain expenditure upon the

Egyptian Army at Suakin? I want to know, what that expenditure was for, what amount we are responsible for, what there may be beyond, and also the total claims made by the Egyptian Government? I think we ought not to be asked to vote money which is to go entirely into the Egyptian Exchequer without understanding something about it; therefore, I wish to learn whether the sums claimed by the Egyptian Government were really larger originally; why the Government insist on reducing them, and why, in the Papers presented to Parliament, those items are not included? When Parliament is asked to vote a sum of £150,000 out of the pockets of the English taxpayer for the payment of people in Egypt, I think it is necessary to have some explanation of the purpose for which it has been employed, who will profit by it, and what is the nature of the services the Egyptian Government performed for which they are now seeking payment. Then I should like to know whether the English Government was made liable for this payment by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff or by Sir Evelyn Baring, and I should like further to know where the despatch is from either of those gentlemen to the Home Government giving information on the subject. It is somewhat curious that an attentive reading of the Blue Books shows some remarkable gaps so far as authority is concerned. It might almost appear that some despatches have been unfairly left out, but I know that that is impossible in the straightforward way in which we manage things in this country. At any rate, the Government appear to have displayed careful carelessness in leaving out anything that would enlighten an unofficial Member. I trust that I shall get the answer which I hope to get, and in the event of not getting it, I shall certainly continue, as long as the Committee will permit me, to press these questions upon its attention. It may be necessary for me to say something more. I cannot believe that any Member on either side of the House would be a party to throwing away the money of the nation without having some indication of the way in which it is spent. Having become bound to pay something for extra services—an unknown amount—I want to know if there have been any other extra services, and whether the British Commander-in-

Chief has any authority to pledge this country further; if so, to what extent; whether for garrisoning duties, or what are the peculiar services for which authority has been given by the Secretary of State for War? If no authority has been given by the Secretary of State for War, then by whom has the authority been given, and where are the despatches which relate to the matter? I do not propose at the present moment to occupy the time of the Committee with criticism, but I will reserve all I have to say until I receive an answer to these questions.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has adopted rather an indignant tone as to the nature of the information laid before the House, and also as to the nature of the services rendered for the money paid to the Egyptian Government. Now I would venture to remind the hon. Gentleman and the Committee that Her Majesty's Government, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) has pointed out, although they are responsible for settling these claims, are not responsible for having initiated them. Her Majesty's Government were forced to take up matters as they stood.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will the hon. Gentleman permit me to say that I have read a despatch showing that the responsibility originated with the right hon. Gentleman the present Leader of the House in relation to this item.

MR. BRODRICK: No doubt that is correct in relation to one battalion, but the hon. Gentleman does not appear to have thoroughly investigated the despatches to which he has referred, and which show that Her Majesty's late Advisers incurred direct responsibility for the defence of Suakin and the Frontier of Egypt. I would refer the hon. Gentleman to a despatch bearing date April 12th, 1886. He will there find it stated by the British Commander-in-Chief that the sum which has been placed on the Estimate for 1886-7 had been already exceeded to the extent of £16,000. Before the present Government came into Office the total was considerably swelled for services at Suakin.

Mr. Bradlaugh

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the hon. Gentleman referring to Paper No. 73, April 12th, 1886.

MR. BRODRICK: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me to explain; the Papers have been carried up to the latest moment—up to the time of printing.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I understood the hon. Gentleman to quote a despatch dated April 12th, 1886. Now, there is a despatch of that date, but I do not find in it the passage quoted by the hon. Gentleman, although there is another of that date which contains a very different signification. I want to know whether the hon. Gentleman is referring to that despatch?

MR. BRODRICK: I am referring to the despatch which states that the last demand upon the British Government was for £16,640, and which states that that sum had been incurred in liabilities on the part of Her Majesty's Government.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: What despatch is that?

MR. BRODRICK: It is dated April 12th, 1886.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Is it published?

MR. BRODRICK: Yes. I am reading from the Blue Book "Egypt No. 5, 1886," page 23. The hon. Member asks whether the Commander-in-Chief in Egypt is justified in incurring expenditure without Government control. Certainly. Constant references have been made by the Commander-in-Chief in Egypt to Her Majesty's Government; and I may remind the hon. Gentleman that Sir Frederick Stephenson is responsible for the authority having been given for the amount of the Egyptian claims to which my right hon. Friend alluded. As to what those claims are I am perfectly ready to give the hon. Gentleman information in detail. One battalion was authorized to be raised for Suakin in 1885; two battalions were authorized for the Nile by the order of the late Secretary of State for War in June, 1886; and the Suakin expenditure, as I pointed out just now, rose from an Estimate of £58,000 to a total of £156,000. The total for Suakin and these additional battalions at the close of the year amounted to £137,252. Besides that sum, General Stephenson had authorized the increase of a dépôt battalion

which cost £4,500. Then there were certain payments for forage, &c., which amounted to £23,000, and claims for railway staff in the Soudan and other expenses, which amounted to a sum of £9,000; making in all £173,750 authorized by the General Commanding. Beyond that sum, Her Majesty's Government undertook to pay a claim of £45,000 preferred by the Egyptian Government; and in granting that sum they were guided by the undertaking Her Majesty's Government had entered into, by which this country had given a pledge to Egypt. That undertaking was not, as the hon. Gentleman the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has suggested, due to the poverty of Egypt, nor is it made simply to make up a certain payment which the Egyptian Government are bound to discharge in reference to the coupons; but it is made in consequence of a despatch sent by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), which is dated the 20th April, 1885, and which has already been placed before Parliament, in which the noble Marquess states that the Government would maintain a garrison in Suakin and would defend the Egyptian frontier. The policy of the late Administration was to remove as many troops as possible from Egypt, and to replace them by the services of Egyptian troops. The result of that policy was that between the months of January, 1886, and the 30th of September, the Egyptian Army was increased by 5,000, and, at the same time, the British troops were decreased by 10,000; consequently, the services of a garrison at Suakin and of troops to defend the Egyptian Frontier, to which the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale had pledged Her Majesty's Government, had to be undertaken by Egyptian soldiers, and those services were undertaken under the direct orders of Sir Frederick Stephenson. The order which Sir Frederick Stephenson gave, and the liabilities which Her Majesty's Government undertook, they are bound to make good; and it is in pursuance of that policy that this *Supplementary Estimate* has been rendered necessary. The hon. Gentleman asks why the Government reduced the claims preferred by the Egyptian Government? They reduced those claims

because they had not made themselves liable for a portion of them which went beyond the points which the British Government undertook to carry out. As regards the future, something has been said by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). The hon. Member asked—What was the protection which the country possessed against similar demands hereafter? In reply to that, I may say that the hon. Member is probably aware that since the close of last year there has been a considerable reduction in the number of the English troops serving in Egypt, and also in the Egyptian Army; in consequence of which the expenditure has been brought down to a lower figure. In addition to that, there has been an attempt at securing economy with respect to the pay and equipment of the Egyptian Army. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) immediately on coming into Office appointed an officer to supervise the expenditure for which we became responsible on account of the Egyptian Army; and also to see, with regard to the money spent on the British troops in Egypt, that a sovereign's value was obtained for every sovereign spent. Her Majesty's Government anticipate very considerable economy from the investigation which it has been possible to make. As the Committee will understand, matters have somewhat settled down, and it will be now more possible to carry out a system of economy than it was last year. Under these circumstances I think we may hope for good results, and we are of opinion that the Committee will not complain that Her Majesty's Government have looked their liabilities in the face and that they have endeavoured to liquidate them. If it is said that we have paid £500,000, as the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) has intimated, I reply that we have done nothing of the kind. I am not prepared at this moment to go into the question of the £240,000, which, it has been ruled, would not be in Order; but, having regard to the circumstances under which the Nile Expedition was undertaken, I shall be prepared when the time comes to show that for the money expended a fair result has been obtained. As regards the remaining portion of the £500,000, I have endeavoured to explain to the Committee

the circumstances under which it was incurred. I do not think I have omitted to reply upon any point which has been raised, except that of general expenditure, into which I shall not follow the hon. Gentleman on the present occasion. The sum recouped by the Egyptian Government is one which, in discharge of their just liability, Her Majesty's Government believe that they are bound to make good. There has been a considerable reduction made; and if it is possible to reduce our Army in Egypt to a greater extent, and effect economy with respect to the Egyptian Army, the sum paid will be still further reduced. We have accepted the principle of paying what we have undertaken to pay, and we trust that the economical measures which will now be taken, and the close investigation which is now being made, will clear off the remaining liabilities which have been thrown upon this country in connection with Egypt.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I shall now have to appeal to the First Lord of the Treasury, because there is an absolute contradiction between the statements of the Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Brodrick) and the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Ferguson). I read on Monday last to the Committee the despatch dated the 12th of April, 1886, which is one of the pieces of evidence on which I made the statement that the English Government had made itself liable for the payment of £73,000 on account of Suakin. Several answers were given to me by the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. One was that there was no bargain that the English Government had made itself responsible; that it had never communicated such intention to the Egyptian Government, and that it never intended to carry out the arrangement; and that there was only the sum of £35,000 to pay this year. I pressed my Question to a degree which, I believe, was by the right hon. Baronet thought to be not quite civil and polite. I make excuse that I cannot understand English otherwise than as it is printed, and that I had in my hand an absolute official contradiction of what the right hon. Baronet said. It was for that reason that I put my Questions to-night; and I now want to explain that I was quite

accurate in the statement I made. The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Brodrick) says there is a claim made by the Egyptian Government, which is made up partly by £73,000, for which the Government became liable under the despatch of the 12th of April, 1886. Who is right? The right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Ferguson) said on Monday last—

“You must not attack Sir Henry Drummond Wolff for making this arrangement, for he never made it; there never was such an arrangement; there was no such liability.”

I am not acquainted with the method in which diplomatic answers are understood, and accordingly I misunderstood the answer of the right hon. Baronet. I admit that I am learning a good deal about diplomatic matters in this House; but I never expected that, the Leader of the House being present, who is responsible for much more than his Secretaries allege. [*Cries of “No, no!”*] I only know what I am told in the Papers laid before Parliament, and I will read what they say. Let me say that, to me, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether the present Government or the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was liable for what has been done. I attack it in any case. I attacked it from my place, as one of the supporters of the Member for Mid Lothian when he was in Office, and I should attack it were he the Leader of the House at the present moment if he had been responsible for it. So that, in fixing the present Leader of the House with this £70,000—less perhaps the difference between £11,000 and £16,000—I do not do so to acquit the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian nor to burden the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. I do it for the purpose of showing that the present Government do not understand the facts on which this claim is based; and I say that until they have made up their mind on the subject they ought not to ask the Committee to vote this money. I will now call attention to the answer of the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) to my Question. I have had some experience in examination, and I put a Question to the Financial Secretary which would enable me to apply criticism to the answers I had

received. His answer was frank in the extreme. The Financial Secretary to the War Office said, in answer to my Question whether the amount originally claimed was larger and whether the Government had reduced it, that the Government had reduced the claim from £174,000 to £150,000—or whatever it was reduced to—because they were only liable for that for which they had given definite orders. But that is exactly opposite to what the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said on Monday. Possibly the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would say that he had not during the short time he has been in Office been able to read through the despatches, and that he had unintentionally misled the Committee. If not, there is an absolute clashing of statement. General Stephenson is admitted to be a person entitled to speak on the subject. I will quote from the enclosure No 60, page 63, Egypt 5, 1886. General Stephenson says—

“With reference to Major Lennox’s letters of the 24th December, I inform you that the Secretary of State for War”—the present Leader of the House—“desires that the Egyptian Government should raise two additional battalions as part of the Egyptian Army, the charge for which will be borne by the British Government.”

I do not attach any importance to its being either one or two battalions, except to the extent that I would suggest that Officials asking for this money should know whether it is one or two; or, otherwise, not ask for the money at all.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I said two.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I am dealing with the reply of the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary.

MR. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member referred to the Officials of the Government.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I did not intend to use the word Officials. I referred to the Financial Secretary to the War Department, who, in answer to my Question, said that the right hon. Gentleman was responsible for one battalion.

MR. BRODRICK: I stated that the right hon. Gentleman was responsible for two battalions. I said at first that he was responsible for one battalion; but the right hon. Gentleman corrected

me, and I then said that he was responsible for two.

MR. BRADLAUGH: But it is a little more than one or two battalions; it is the whole garrison at Suakin. What the Government authorized has cost much more than one or two battalions would cost, and that cost was originated on the 24th December, 1885; it was part of the initial arrangement made when the present Leader of the House was Secretary of State for War.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Perhaps I can save the hon. Gentleman some trouble by stating the circumstances under which these battalions were authorized. It is within the knowledge of the House that the English Government had a large Force at Suakin. It was a very costly Force both in men and money, and when I was responsible for the War Department I became aware that we were using an extravagant instrument in undertaking the duty which we were discharging at Suakin, and which we had inherited from our Predecessors. I stated to my Colleagues, and obtained their full concurrence, that in my opinion we ought to discharge this duty by men suited to the climate rather than expose English and Indian troops to great risk; and I pointed out that a greater cost was involved to the Imperial Exchequer by keeping an English or Indian Force at Suakin than would be incurred if Black troops were substituted for it. We authorized, therefore—and the expression used was “for the present”—the formation of these two battalions; first the one, and then the second. My right hon. Friends are perfectly accurate in their statements. I admit the responsibility, and I am perfectly prepared to justify it; and if the right hon. Gentleman who followed me in the Office addresses the Committee, I am sure that he will not only justify, but approve, it.

MR. BRADLAUGH: If we had received that frank statement of facts on Monday, it would have saved the whole of this discussion now. But the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs persisted that no such expenditure had been authorized by the Government at all.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir

JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I beg pardon; I denied that it was intended to be permanent. I admitted that the words "an annual expenditure" occurred in the despatch; but that it was one which had been authorized under the existing circumstances. I stated that the expenditure had ceased; that it was no longer necessary to incur it, and I will add that it is so stated in the Estimates of the present year.

MR. BRADLAUGH: It appears that I misunderstood the right hon. Baronet, and that in doing so I laboured under the same misunderstanding as the reporters of the public Press. One of the statements of the right hon. Baronet was that the authorization was not made known to the Egyptian Government.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I said that we had come under no obligation to the Egyptian Government for the permanent grant of this money.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Again I regret that my view does not corroborate what the right hon. Baronet intended to say. I am bound to accept his assurance that it was his intention to say this. I read to him the despatch, which absolutely contradicted what he was saying; and I remember using this argument—If the matter had not been communicated to the Egyptian Government, how could they know it? I could not find any despatch which communicated it; but I read through a despatch from the Representative of the Egyptian Government, showing that they did know it. I pressed this point, as I always do, with the endeavour to make it clear; and I do not think any hon. Member not on the Government Benches would say that I did not make it clear. We have been made liable, certainly for one year, for the cost at Suakin, in spite of the explanatory statement of the right hon. Baronet; we were made liable for the claim of £170,000, which was reduced to £150,000 because it was in excess of the orders. What other matters are there included in this expenditure except those relating to the garrison at Suakin? If we are liable for money, what is the amount; where is the authority; and why is the House asked to vote money without knowing something about it? I say that this Vote ought either to be explained or withdrawn until fuller Papers are laid upon the Table of the House. I trust that

the Leader of the House and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will not think that I have exceeded my duty in pressing them upon this point. What I wish to know is that which I think the Committee ought to know—As it is clear now that the English Government made themselves responsible for £150,000 to the Egyptian Government, we ought to have before us how the claim for £173,000 arose on the one side, and whether there were any definite orders on the other. At the most, we have only the definite orders in the despatch of the 12th April; and it is not fair that we should be called upon to vote, nor will I be a party to voting away, the money of the English taxpayer for purposes the object and extent of which we know nothing about.

MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): I regret that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) and the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) have thought to make their case better by attributing the expenditure now in question to their Predecessors in Office. I am not going to deny any share that I had in sanctioning this expenditure, the greater part of which was incurred before I became responsible for the War Department. With regard to the question of the garrison at Suakin, it is a matter very much apart from the rest; it is a separate and distinct undertaking which was entered into by the British Government. The facts are precisely as the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has stated. We had at Suakin at the beginning of last year a considerable garrison, partly composed of British and partly of Indian troops. The climate there is deadly, both to the British and Indian soldier, and it became absolutely necessary, on the ground of humanity, as well as on the ground of expenditure, to endeavour to substitute for the soldiers then at Suakin another garrison. My right hon. Predecessor, therefore, after favourably considering some proposals to place there what is called a Native garrison, consisting of Arabs, finally, I believe, sanctioned the formation by the Egyptian Government of two Black battalions for the defence of Suakin. My right hon. Friend believed, in the innocence of his heart, that the Estimate of the cost sent home

would be sufficient, and in the respective innocence of my heart also, when I came into Office, I entertained a similar belief. But the expenditure, which at first was placed at £40,000, was discovered to be £52,000 in January; later on it jumped to £70,000; and when I last heard of it, in the month of July, it was put, owing to some alleged mistake in the calculations, at £106,000. Partly owing to this circumstance, and to other experience at the War Office, I soon began to be very suspicious of financial arrangements in military matters in Egypt; and I must honestly say that, in my opinion, nothing could be more unsatisfactory than the relations in this respect between the British and Egyptian Governments. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) represented the late Government as having been somewhat indifferent, or, at all events, inert in this matter, and he stated that the very first step that was taken in order to solve the difficulty which existed was the appointment by my right hon. Friend and Successor of Colonel Ardagh to control the military expenditure in Egypt. But I must say that through the early months of last year my right hon. Friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer and myself had been greatly exercised in mind on this subject of Egyptian military expenditure; and that, ultimately, seeing no light in this country upon the matter, and obtaining no satisfaction from Egypt, I asked an officer well known for his capacity, intelligence, and knowledge of the subject (Colonel Grove), to go out to Egypt in order to investigate matters on the spot, and among them this very question of financial control. I found there was a considerable difference of opinion prevailing as to the liabilities of the English Government in this matter. I believe that the Convention fixed the total Expenditure of Egypt at £5,537,000, and that was expected and intended to cover the whole expenditure of that country, including, of course, the annual allowance or subvention of this country of £200,000. But under the Convention of 1885 the Military Budget, as it was called, of Egypt was limited to £130,000, and there was in many quarters—and apparently it existed in high quarters in Egypt—an impression that the Egyptian military expenditure was to be confined to £130,000, and that

for any expenditure incurred over that amount the British Government was to be responsible; that is to say, if anything was done—of course, under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief in Egypt—which caused additional expenditure, we were to be responsible for it, whatever might be the amount. That seemed to me to be eminently unsatisfactory; and there was also this cause of dissatisfaction, that we had no means of knowing whether the Egyptian Army expenditure, even within the limit of the £130,000, was legitimate or not; so that the whole of the arrangements seemed to me to be in a state of chaos. I therefore took the first step, which I am very glad to know that my right hon. Friend immediately followed, of sending out a qualified officer, in order that there might, at all events, be some control over this source of expenditure. That was the condition of things which has apparently resulted in this Supplementary Estimate. I am not able to follow the statement of the particulars which make up this sum, as given by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, and I do not know that we have been given any absolute detail of the items which compose it; but what I am anxious about is not so much the past as the future. I am not disposed to follow my two hon. Friends in their general remarks upon Egyptian finance, in which they stated views which, to their credit be it said, they have put forward in season and out of season. With many of their remarks I confess that, personally, I have considerable sympathy; but I think the question of importance to the House is, whether this represents a final settlement of the state of confusion to which I have referred? Does it wipe out the obligation of this country beyond the maintenance of our own Army in Egypt? How is it with regard to Suakin itself? Suakin was in a difficult position, and we undertook with regard to it a special and distinct liability. We inserted a definite amount in the Estimates of the year, which, at the time, appeared sufficient for the purpose in view, but which subsequently proved to be insufficient. There is no such item in the present Estimates, and I ask, what is to be done with Suakin this year? And then as to the other question, the general state of affairs in Egypt with regard to the military ex-

penditure. Is this a final settlement, and are we not likely in future to have any claims upon us that can be properly justified by the Egyptian Government; and shall we continue to receive the subsidy of £200,000, or such proportion of it as may be due to the decreased Force which we maintain? I think that if these questions are answered in the way I hope they will be, and if we are informed more fully as to the future relations between the two countries in these matters, there will be no disposition to refuse—at least, I should be slow to take any part in refusing—assent to a proposal, formidable indeed in its appearance, but still possibly providing a fair solution of a difficulty which had arisen, and which, I confess, appeared to me to be of a very dangerous and not altogether creditable character.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) has put forward some very fair questions to the Government, which I am prepared to answer categorically. My right hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) has spoken of the state of confusion which exists—the state of confusion as regards the financial provision for the Egyptian Army, and the relative liabilities between this Government and the Egyptian Government. As the Committee will have gathered, the transactions which we are now considering date back some time, extending, in fact, from 1885-6 into the present financial year. It seemed to the Government to be absolutely necessary to bring this matter to a point; it appeared to them to be absolutely indispensable to come to a final settlement with the Egyptian Government about the outstanding claims, and then to explain as clearly as possible what our attitude will be in the future. With regard to the past, I am able to state, in reply to my right hon. Friend, that with the exception, I think, of one item of £25,000, which is still in dispute between the War Office and the Egyptian Government, an understanding has been arrived at on every point. The Committee can easily understand, looking to the enormous expenditure which has been incurred, that it is perfectly possible there may be a disputed item of this kind — [Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN: Not an annual item.]—Oh, no. Ac-

counts to the amount of upwards of £500,000 have been sent in, and among these accounts there has been one item of £25,000, with regard to which a controversy is still going on. It is not an annual item at all. The Government have, as has been stated by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), had very large claims sent in by Egypt, and these claims have been reduced more than £300,000 during the last two months, and this reduction represents the whole excess of which my right hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) has spoken. But I wish the Committee to know this—they are entitled to know it—that the Egyptian Government, up to the very last, were in the hope that the English Government would pay the whole of this amount; and it was a great disappointment to them when they learned that their demands had been cut down to the sum now asked for from this Committee. A question has very properly been raised as to the despatches which may have passed between us and the Egyptian Government, or our officers in Egypt, with regard to this subject. The point is this—we have to defend ourselves against two possible attacks. While the Egyptian Government and its Representatives are attacking us, and saying that we ought to pay for more than we have paid, it is only natural that we are attacked by a certain portion of this Committee for having paid too much. Now, in the despatches—confidential despatches, which passed—there are many arguments used in favour of an increased liability on the part of this country, which, I confess, I should be sorry to see published, because they would furnish grounds for those with whom we are in controversy to urge in favour of larger claims than we are prepared to admit. It was an extremely difficult matter to determine equitably what ought to be admitted, and what ought not. We have given our best consideration to the question in order to come to a fair settlement, and we believe that the amount which has ultimately been admitted is a fair claim upon us. With regard to the future, the Government are not prepared to continue to subsidize the Egyptian Army; and the Egyptian Government and its financial Advisers are now engaged in seeing how they may recast their whole expenditure, in

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

order to meet that somewhat increased expenditure on the Egyptian Army which may be necessary. I think that all have come to the conclusion that the sum of £130,000 will not cover the whole of the expenses of the Egyptian Army, but that they also have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to keep up the large Egyptian Force which had been originally fixed; and that Force admits of reduction. The Egyptian Government are also examining another important point—namely, the question of pensions, which, in the Egyptian Budget, forms a very heavy item. They have not yet been able to settle their final account for the Budget of 1887; but they are framing that Budget upon the understanding that the English Government will not put upon the Estimates any amount as a subvention to Egyptian expenditure, and that this country will charge as much to them for the Army of Occupation as represents the fair excess over the ordinary expenditure upon the troops. That is the intimation that has been conveyed to the Egyptian Government, and upon which they must construct their Budget. I may also notice the charge which has been brought against Her Majesty's Government of producing this sum in a Supplementary Estimate. Hon. Members who make this charge will see it could not have been placed in the original Estimate, as that was prepared by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) in February of last year. A large portion of this charge has been incurred since the Estimates were produced; and I think we are only acting fairly by the Committee in dealing with it at once in a Supplementary Estimate, rather than hanging up the question, which ought to be immediately settled, until the next Army Estimates are discussed. I think I have now answered all the questions which have been put to the Government.—[MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: With regard to Suakin?] With regard to Suakin, and the controversy which has been raging in respect of our undertaking it, we do not consider that we are pledged to the Egyptian Government for an annual payment for Suakin. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has commented upon the presence of the word "annual" in the despatch of General Stephenson. The term was

used by General Stephenson; but we are not at all bound by it. The expression could not bind us to an annual payment; and I go so far as to say that an annual payment was never intended. However that may be, we do not recognize the liability, and our Estimates are framed on the basis that the charge for Suakin will fall within the Egyptian Budget, and within its Army expenditure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, N.): I am afraid the real channel of this discussion may be lost in the attempt, on the part of the Front Benches, to throw blame upon each other; but if there is any good to be got out of these acts of mismanagement or unjustifiable interference in Egypt, I think now is the time that the moral should be drawn. What are the facts? I believe it would be very difficult indeed to make out that Egypt has benefited by our interference in that country. It is doubtless true that a very large expenditure has been cast upon this country, and that additional and grievous burdens have been cast upon Egypt itself as well. Reference has been made to the question of the bondholders, and we are assured by the Government that this expenditure which now appears in the Supplementary Estimate is not connected with, and does not arise out of, the determination of the British Government—and far more so of the British Government than of the Egyptian Government—to maintain the payment of interest to the Egyptian bondholders. I think history will declare that this Egyptian embroglio originated in nothing else than in the unwarrantable interference of the British Government in the interests of the Egyptian bondholders. Reference has been made to the condition of the fellaheen, and the breach of faith with those people. The Government seem to have forgotten altogether—

MR. GOSCHEN: I understand, though I am speaking without figures, that a portion of the land tax has been remitted, as contemplated.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The right hon. Gentleman has a very keen, analytical mind, and he must admit that the case of the fellaheen was infinitely stronger than that of the bondholders in Egypt. [MR. GOSCHEN: Hear, hear!] The concern of the Government seems

to have been that the bondholders should have their pound of flesh, and that the fellaheen should come in afterwards.

MR. GOSCHEN: When the English Government acted in 1885, it was acting in concert with the other Powers of Europe.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is true. But if it had not been for the interference of the right hon. Gentleman himself, and those who were supremely concerned for the bondholders, what would have happened would have been this—the Egyptian Government would have declared its inability to meet the charges of the bondholders, and there would have been that very common way of getting rid of debt—namely, through insolvency.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Illingworth) is hardly dealing with the Supplementary Estimate in what he is now saying.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I submit, with all deference, Sir, that there is some connection between my remarks and this Estimate. I maintain that it would have been easy for the Egyptian Government to have met these extra charges if it had not been for the care shown for the bondholders. The Egyptians would have been willing to have met the charges incurred in this military expenditure, if there had not been a strong determination to force upon them the obligation of continuing the bondholders' interest. But, Sir, I leave that subject altogether; I only wish that Parliament and the country would be induced to look at this question now as a matter of history. It is well known that when a former Government embarked in this Egyptian business, a small minority of us protested against the impolicy of our intervention in Egyptian affairs. I believe that there is now on this side of the House, and, judging from the apologetic tone adopted by hon. Members opposite there, on that side of the House also, a conviction that the sooner we get out of Egypt the better. I must really take exception to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) also, that we are charging Egypt £4 per head extra, which is supposed to be the additional cost of our troops in that country.

Mr. Illingworth

But, surely, if we keep 5,000, or 10,000, or 15,000 troops to do work in Egypt, a great burden is cast on the British taxpayer. It is not the £4 alone which is to be taken into account, but the £50 or £60 or £80 per man, which our soldiers cost us. I think the Committee ought to understand that if even 5,000 troops are kept in Egypt, if we are to undertake obligations of a similar character in all parts of the world, the British Army must be increased proportionately. If we keep ourselves free from such interference, it is clear the British Army may be permanently decreased in the same proportion. Let us look the facts in the face. I will only just say, in conclusion, I do not care to enter into a wrangle as to whether this charge is proper or not; but I say, heavily burdened as the British nation is, I think that morality dictates that this charge should be borne by the British Government rather than it should be placed on the Egyptians. I consider it very slight justification for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell us that, of course, we were acting in concert with the other Powers. Well, we were acting in concert with the other Powers of Europe, and all the more to our discredit, because what occasion had we to make ourselves chargeable for the interest of the bondholders; what occasion had we to act with the other European Powers even to that extent? I only wish we had come more creditably out of this Egyptian business, and had shown the fellaheen more consideration. We have been parties to the most disgraceful transactions possible in postponing and in ignoring the claims of the poor slaves in Egypt in order that the usurious terms of the bondholders might be complied with. I think our connection with the whole business is discreditable in the highest degree, and that the sooner we escape from the false position we occupy the better. The less we undertake interference with quarrels of this character the better it will be for our pockets and our reputation.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The objection I have to this Vote is not only founded upon remarks such as have already been addressed to the Chair by hon. Members, but also upon a totally different ground, which I think the preceding Government would

certainly have recognized. It is all very well for the Ministers on the present Treasury Bench to attempt to bring in the late Government for a certain share of responsibility in connection with this service, for which £150,000 is now to be paid by the taxpayers of this Empire. I doubt very much if the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) would have thought it consistent with his duty as Prime Minister and Leader of the House to present the matter to the House in the manner in which it has, in fact, been laid before the House by Her Majesty's present Advisers. I maintain that this system of presenting a charge of this kind in the shape of a demand to make up a deficiency in the appropriation in aid of a certain Army Vote is calculated altogether to mislead the Committee, and to deprive them of that information which they ought to possess. We learn from the War Minister (Mr. E. Stanhope) that the appropriations, except this particular one from the Egyptian Government, were in excess of what had been estimated. He gave us to understand that there were surpluses that went in diminution of what would otherwise be a deficiency, and, therefore, £150,000 does not really represent the whole charge that is involved in this particular Vote. Although the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) invited a detailed statement as to how this appropriation was to be made up, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) did not furnish such a statement to him in the reply he made. What I contend is this—that if the Government want to put themselves straight with the Egyptian Government, if they want to make matters straight and clear as between the Egyptian Government and Her Majesty's Government, they ought to take a separate Vote, and give the full and complete information which is necessary to enable the House to arrive at a proper judgment. It is perfectly impossible to arrive at such a judgment on the materials now submitted. We really do not know how we stand. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself admitted that there was over and above this matter an item of £25,000 which was not adjusted between the two Governments. But, as a matter of fact,

there is a great deal more unadjusted. This Government is doing things which no Government ought to do, and which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian never would have consented to do. In the months of September and October last—that is, in the course of the financial year in which we now are—in the course of the year for which these Supplementary Estimates are asked—the Government authorized a certain amount of expenditure on account of Egypt which is not mentioned in this Supplementary Vote at all, and which is a very considerable item. Instead of putting it down to the accounts of the year in which it was authorized, they instructed the War Office officials to make a charge in a previous year which was entirely closed, which had entirely expired, and under a heading where no provision whatsoever had been made for it. Accordingly, in the Appropriation Accounts just laid before Parliament, we have the astonishing item—

"Payment to the Egyptian Government on account of expenses in connection with the operations of the Gordon Relief Expedition up the Nile, £234,000,"

which has never figured in any Estimate, which has never been brought before the House at all, and which would never have been brought to the attention of Parliament, unless for the necessity for these accounts being submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General. What does the Comptroller and Auditor General say about the matter? He says he cannot admit that there is a legitimate charge against the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a point which is not relevant to this Vote.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: My object, Mr. Courtney, is to draw attention to a payment in respect of Egypt which cannot possibly be covered by the Supplementary Estimate which is now submitted, and that in assenting to this Estimate, if we do, we are practically doing so in the dark with regard to the financial relations of Her Majesty's Government to the Egyptian Government as to military expenditure. That is the reason why I object to this Vote being included, as it is now, in a general Army Supplementary Estimate, figuring in the Supplementary Estimate not as a direct Vote for direct services set out in detail, but merely to make up an alleged deficiency in the contribution which Egypt

ought to have made. Now, this payment of £150,000 on account of Army Services from Egypt was made last year and the year before; but it was purely illusory, because, on the other hand, we admitted charges which more than wiped it out. We are told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) that there is only an item of £25,000 outstanding between the two Governments. I maintain that that is clearly an insufficient, if not an incorrect, statement, because we have not had from the Government this evening any clear statement of the real position of the two Governments, either with respect to military expenditure, or the arrangements relating to military expenditure, or with regard to anything else. We have had a fragmentary statement only from the War Minister. We have had another statement equally fragmentary, though in a different direction, from the Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Brodric); and we have had what was meant as an explanation from the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson). I am bound to say that, listening, with as fair and open a mind as I could, to the declarations of these three Gentlemen, I am utterly unable to understand now the present position of the Government with regard to the military expenditure in Egypt, or the liabilities of Egypt to this country, or the liabilities of this country towards Egypt; and I make bold to say that, if I do not understand, there are many other Members of the House equally unable to understand. Instead of having this Vote included, as it is, in this Supplementary Estimate, we ought to have had, and I believe we should have had from any other Government, a direct Vote submitted to the Committee.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I noticed that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) carefully avoided what appears to me a really strong point made against this Vote. Clothe it as you may as necessary payment for services in Egypt, made under the authority of the British Commander-in-Chief, there cannot be the slightest doubt in the mind of any intelligent man who has watched the course of affairs in Egypt, that the object and purpose of this Vote is really to enable the Egyptian Government to meet in full the coupons which fall due

in this month, or next month, for the first time for the last three years. Now, according to the statement of Sir Evelyn Baring, the Egyptian Government is perfectly able to meet its obligations, and to pay this sum which it undertook to pay, but under a certain condition. What is that condition? It is that the interest on the Egyptian loans shall remain this year at the same figure as it has been paid at for the last two years—that is to say, that the Egyptian bondholders shall not get their full interest. If you face the situation honestly, and, taking advantage of Article 12 of the Khedivial Decree, made in 1885, allow an international investigation into the finances of Egypt, it will be found that the Egyptian Government have money actually in their hands with which to pay this account, and that there is not the slightest necessity for the British Government to pay it. If there is any doubt as to the real object and purpose of this Vote, I ask hon. Gentlemen to consider the exact figures. What are the figures? We have the statement of Sir Evelyn Baring as to the benefit that accrues to the Egyptian Government by the cutting of the coupon by 5 per cent. That benefit amounts to £200,000 a-year, and it is a curious coincidence that the sum we are asked to provide is exactly £200,000. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the object the Government had in view was to discharge honestly the obligations they had contracted with the Egyptians in the past; and that the Egyptian Government had been informed that, for the future, the Government of this country was not prepared to subsidize the Government of Egypt, and that the Egyptians would be charged a certain sum, which he mentioned, for the Army of Occupation. But that was what the Egyptians were informed two years ago. Was not a solemn Convention entered into, to the very effect that they would be charged this sum for the Army of Occupation, and that this Government would not subsidize the Army. Do you suppose that the Egyptian Government will believe you now when you did not keep your word last time, when you told them, two years ago, what you are telling them now? In asking the Committee now to nullify your words and the terms of the Convention, you are practically

telling the Egyptian Government that, for the future, they need not pay any regard to the warnings they receive from Her Majesty's Government. If it were to relieve the Egyptians of these payments, which, I contend, have been most unjustly imposed upon them, I should be the last man in the world to oppose the Vote, and I should vote for it. If I believed that a shilling of the money went to relieve the Egyptian taxpayer, or to get rid of the difficulties of the Egyptian Government, I should raise no objection; but I know very well that nothing of that sort is going to happen. This money will simply go to pay off the full interest on the bonds, to stave off an international inquiry. There cannot be a doubt that the refusal of this Vote to-night would be, not to increase the taxation on the fellaheen, but to cut down the coupon on the bonds. What would be the effect of refusing to vote this sum? Why, as we have it in the words of Sir Evelyn Baring himself, "There will be no way out of the difficulty except to refuse to pay the interest on the Debt." And is not that the right way out of the difficulty? It is a very ingenious thing to put this sum under the appearance of an obligation contracted towards the people of Egypt; but I ask—and I ask the question with confidence—What right had the English Commander-in-Chief to contract this obligation towards the people of Egypt? Does it not stand to reason that, in common fairness, the first charges on the Revenue of any country are the charges for defence against outside enemies? It is not pretended by anyone that the Egyptian Revenue is insufficient to pay an Army three, four, or five times as large as that the country at present maintains. I ask what would have happened to the bondholders if the Soudanese had succeeded in over-running Egypt—if it had not been for the military operations which were taken to suppress them? Would they ever have got any coupons at all? I ask, therefore, if the expenses of defending the country are increased, who have more right to pay them than the coupon-holders? Is it not monstrous to say that the taxpayers of England, who have burdens sufficient on their shoulders at the present moment, shall pay for defending the frontiers of Egypt, when the bondholders who absorb half—nay,

more than half—of the entire Revenue of the country in the shape of interest on the Debt are not to called on to make any sacrifice at all. I must say that the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to me most extraordinary, and the statement that he made at the outset of his speech really convinces me clearly that the position taken up by the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) is unanswerable. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say? He started by saying that the demands of the Egyptian Government on this Government amounted to a sum of £500,000. I would ask the Committee to notice this fact particularly—that the grounds on which we are asked to vote this money are that we have honourable obligations towards the Egyptian Government. Now, if we have honourable obligations towards the Egyptian Government, according to the opinion of the Egyptian Government, these obligations extend to £500,000; but is it not a strange thing that the result of negotiations was to cut it down to £200,000? Now, why was the sum fixed at £200,000?

MR. GOSCHEN: The sum is not £200,000, but £200,000 plus the £58,000; and I can assure the hon. Gentleman, whether he chooses to believe me or not, that this sum of £200,000 has nothing whatever to do with the bondholders.

MR. DILLON: That is an interesting statement of the right hon. Gentleman, and I do not, for a moment, doubt his word; but I cannot understand how he can maintain that position in the face of the despatches of Sir Evelyn Baring. I will read Sir Evelyn Baring's words. He says—"Under these circumstances—"

MR. GOSCHEN: What is the date of that despatch?

MR. DILLON: It is in Egypt, No. 4, of 1886, which I should think would be the last date of the despatches. I have not got the despatch itself, as the page I am referring to only gives the reference. I think it is on page 190, of No. 4, 1886. Sir Evelyn Baring says—

"Under these circumstances there is no possibility that the Egyptian Government will be able to resume full payment in 1887, but for the present it would seem unduly optimistic to speak of this contingency as more than a bare possibility,"

—that is to say, the contingency of resuming full payment. He adds that the sum required to enable Egypt to meet its full obligations is only about £200,000, and one point is quite clear, that the resumption of full payment of the rate of interest can only take place, assuming that the Army expenditure is reduced and non-effective charges are reduced. Well, neither of these things has yet been brought about. Now, that despatch was sent last year by Sir Evelyn Baring, and he says the sum that would enable the Egyptian Government to meet its full obligations is £200,000; and he says one thing is certain—there is no possibility of the resumption of full payment of the rate of interest unless two things be accomplished—first, the reduction in the Army expenditure. Now, there are two ways of reducing an Army expenditure. One way would be to reduce the Army, and the other way would be to get someone else to pay its expenses; and it seems to me that the way which has recommended itself to the Government, under all the circumstances of difficulty which exist, is the latter. The Government appear to have decided that the English people should pay the expenses of the Egyptian Army. I know perfectly well that this money we are called upon to vote is not going to pay the coupons in actual coin; but we have it here, on Sir Evelyn Baring's statement, that one point is essential to the resumption of payment in full of the rate of interest, and that is the reduction of Army expenses; and if you do not call it reducing the Army expenditure in Egypt, when the expenses of the Army, to the extent of £250,000, are to be paid by the English Government, I do not know what transactions of this kind mean. That is one way of reducing Army expenditure. Look at the bearing of it with regard to the future. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that this was a question affecting the past, and that, for the future, he had warned the Egyptian Government that they must reduce their Army in order that they might be able to discharge their obligations to England in the future, which they are not being asked to do now, and also to pay the full amount of interest on the Debt. That is what I object to. If anyone will

take the trouble to study the Egyptian Budgets for the last few years, and the despatches of English officials in Egypt, he will become convinced that the payment of the present interest on the Debt of Egypt is absolutely inconsistent with the due administration of the affairs of the country, and the sooner this fact is recognized the better. What is the good of putting off an insolvency and a bankruptcy which is inevitable, and which ought to come at once, by a waste of British money enabling the Egyptian Government to resume full payment of the interest on the bonds—a payment which she cannot continue if she is to stand on her own legs and administer her own affairs honestly, and defend her own frontier? What are the facts related by the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Why, he says that, in the future, the Egyptian Government will reduce their Army; but has he taken the trouble to ascertain whether the expenditure on the Army is more than the necessities of the case require? He told us the other night that the object of the Government was to get the British troops out of Egypt as soon as possible, and as soon as the Egyptian people were able to defend themselves. Well, is this the way to do it—to put them under a threat that they must now reduce their Army? The result will be that they must reduce their Army, if these payments that we make are withheld; and we shall be told, next time we discuss this matter, that the Egyptian Government are unable to defend the country, and that, therefore, the English taxpayer will have to pay for that defence. It appears to me that it is now time that we faced this question honestly to see if it is possible, or likely to be possible, to pay the bonds without calling on Egypt to relax her efforts for the defence of the country. It is essential to Egypt to so reduce the taxation as to reduce the Revenue by something like £250,000 a-year if the fellahen are to be permitted to live, and that is shown by the fall in the price of produce, according to the statements of Lord Northbrook, when in Egypt; and I should think things have got much worse since Lord Northbrook was there. I have no knowledge that Lord Northbrook's recommendations have been carried out, and that any substantial reduction of taxation has been accorded to the fellahen.

I have been on the look-out for any statement to that effect; but, up to the present, I have been unable to see anything of the kind. You are building on the hopes of this excessive taxation in Egypt, and, even with that excessive taxation, you are telling the people of Egypt to cut down their Army, which is too small already, judged by the fact that you find it necessary to keep a portion of your own Army there. Therefore, you are setting up a system which is utterly inconsistent with the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), that the object of the Government is to put Egypt on its own legs, and yourselves to retire from the country as soon as it is possible to stand alone. As I say, you will find that bankruptcy must be faced sooner or later, and far and away better would it be, I maintain, both for the Egyptian people and the people of this country that we should face it now, when it can be proved that something should be done, to first of all, give relief to the fellahen; and, secondly, to permit the defence of the country to be carried on, before the bondholders are paid at all. There is another consideration we should not lose sight of in this matter. In one despatch, from Lord Rosebery, which has been quoted two or three times during this debate, it was said that we are compelled to pay Customs duties and heavy railroad charges, and also octroi duties on articles which were sent out for the British Army during the British occupation. That is notorious. It is well known by everyone that the revenues of Egypt have been swelled by Customs duties on enormous quantities of material and goods sent into the country for the British Army; and the officials in Egypt, in drawing up the Budget, always have regard to these sources of revenue, and we know, therefore, that the moment you withdraw your troops the revenues of Egypt will fall by £100,000 or £200,000 a-year. That element is not sufficiently considered, and yet it would be very strongly felt the moment the British troops are withdrawn. All this goes to show that this Vote is not a Vote in performance of a specific obligation, but is the result of a bargain. There is no reason why it should not be £200 instead of £200,000. It is a Vote which by all the attendant circumstances sur-

rounding it, and by the amount that is demanded, is shown to be required to balance the Egyptian Budget, let alone for whatever ostensible object it may be given in this House. It is to put off the inevitable time when it will be found that the finances of Egypt are hopelessly insolvent. It is to avoid the necessity of an international inquiry, and for that reason it opens up the whole question of the policy of the present proceedings of the Government in Egypt; and I am thoroughly opposed to it. I wish to say a word or two on some of the observations made to-night by the hon. Gentleman opposite the Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Brodrick). He said that though we are responsible for settling these claims, we are not responsible for originating them. Now, I should like to know very much on what principle do you go in contracting obligations of this sort? Are we to understand that every British Generalissimo, or every British General serving abroad, can contract obligations on behalf of the British taxpayer to any extent he chooses, because that is what it amounts to? The House of Commons and the country knew nothing about these obligations. We were led to suppose that no such obligations would be entered into; and are we, I ask, to understand that obligations of this character can be contracted by a British General *ad libitum*, without reference to those who have to vote the money? We know that from the past history of Egyptian affairs the most extraordinary and sudden wars and outbreaks occur in that country; and are we to understand that if to-morrow the Egyptian frontier, wherever it now is, is attacked by wandering tribes of Arabs, and another war breaks out there, that it should be in the power of the General commanding in Egypt to pledge the British taxpayer to any extent without affording the British House of Commons the opportunity of voting on the matter? You must remember that these obligations we are now discussing were contracted a considerable time ago—quite time enough to have enabled the Government to have put them on the Estimates for last year. The only reason they were not put on the Estimates last year was that they were the subject of protracted negotiation. And now I come to the last point in the Statement of the Financial Secre-

tary to the War Department. What did he say when he was pressed hard upon this question? He said that the amount of these claims was the subject of negotiation up to the very moment before the Supplementary Estimate was prepared, and that the Papers giving information as to the details of this Vote would be placed on the Table of this House after we had passed the Vote. No doubt we shall be very much interested by this information when it comes, and we shall be very much obliged for it when we receive it; but it certainly seems to me that this is a very curious method of proceeding, to ask us to pass the Vote first, and to wait for the documents giving the details of the negotiations by which the sum of £258,000 was arrived at. If these are the circumstances of the case, why did not the Government put the Vote into next year's Estimates? If it hung over so long it might have been put in next year's Estimates very well. There is no use in cloaking the matter over. What is the reason of putting these charges before us now? Why, it is simply this—that the Egyptian Budget will have to be made known shortly, and if, on a certain day the bonds are not paid, the right of the Powers of Europe under the decree will come in—the right of the Powers to form an International body to inquire into the administration of Egyptian finance. Is not my surmise correct—may I have an answer on this point?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Before this Vote is put to the Committee I should like to say a few words with regard to it. I must say that the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Dillon) has put his case very forcibly; and in reply to him, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) has denied that this Vote has anything to do with the bondholders. But will he deny this—that if £500,000 sterling is not paid to the Egyptian Government, it will not be able to meet its liabilities, and that then there will have to be a new European investigation. In that way, it is perfectly clear that the question is connected with the bondholders. As regards the particular Vote before the House, I think that what has happened will have convinced all of us that it is a most unsatisfactory

mode of proceeding, that we should have it thrown at our heads in a Supplementary Estimate without any previous explanation or statement as to why this money is to be voted. As regards the only particulars we are able to ascertain, I cordially agree with what has fallen from the late Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). You must take the question of Suakin as altogether apart from the other questions involved. We have taken upon ourselves the defence of that place, and have voted the specific sum of £58,000 in regard to it. The only part of the case against this Vote which has been answered is that with regard to Suakin. We are told we have undertaken the defence of that place, and that it has cost more than it was calculated to cost—we are told that the sum has come to nearly double the amount of the calculation—that it has reached £106,000. This House was led to believe, and this country was led to believe, that a contract was made with the Egyptians that they should undertake the defence of Suakin for this £58,000, *plus* a large quantity of stores. I admit, therefore, that there may be a shadow of a shade of a semblance of a case for Suakin. If the detailed accounts show that Suakin has cost more than £58,000, there may be a case for the extra cost. At any rate, I, for one, shall be prepared to give Egypt the benefit of the doubt. If the House would allow me to substitute for the Motion to reduce this Vote by £150,000, a Motion for a less reduction, I should like to allow £20,000 for Suakin, and to alter the Motion into one to reduce the Vote by £130,000. I do not object to the item for Suakin so much. I doubt if we are bound to vote any more under that head; but, at any rate, as I have said, I am prepared to give Egypt the benefit of the doubt as regards the excess now demanded. I deny, however, that, as regards the rest, any case at all has been made out. The vaguest words fell from Her Majesty's late Government that they were going to defend Egypt, but this did not mean paying for the defence; and I do not think that the House or the country had the least idea that we were to pay the Egyptians for fighting their own battles. I am, therefore, quite prepared to take issue on the major part of the Vote. I share very

much with the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary of State for War the feeling that, great as this loss of £500,000 may be that we are paying in the present year, there is still room for very grave anxiety in the future. I was gratified when the Chancellor of the Exchequer got up and said that he would answer the Questions put to him categorically. When he came to his categorical answers, however, I was much disappointed, because he did not tell us what was to become of Suakin; he did not tell us what was to be done in the matter of the Egyptian frontier, and he neglected to say what course was to be taken in regard to Egyptian finance in the future. What are we to be told as to these matters? Are the Egyptians to be told that they may abandon this miserable, God-forgotten place, Suakin? They ought to be free to make it over to any Power, or anybody else who will take it, or abandon it altogether. What is more important than Suakin is this—I want to understand whether the Egyptians are to be responsible for the defence of their own frontier? Is there any clear understanding that the expense of defending the frontier shall be thrown on the Egyptians? We have a British force in Assouan. I want to know whether, in the event of military operations being necessary on that frontier, and the Egyptian troops being obliged to co-operate with the British troops in defence of their frontier, we shall be called upon to pay for these Egyptian troops? Is it distinctly understood that the expenses will be thrown upon the Egyptian Exchequer? As to the Egyptian Army, it is a most unsatisfactory declaration that has been elicited from Her Majesty's Government. It does not seem to me that we have the least prospect of getting rid of our obligations in Egypt, and getting rid of the country, if the Egyptian Army is to be reduced. You must have an efficient Army in Egypt, and if you have that, you must have money to pay for it. And I should like to know what is to be done to enable the Egyptians to keep up an efficient Army? If you are not to maintain an efficient Army in that country, then good-bye to all abandonment of Egypt. I should like to have it made clear—I should like not merely a negative declaration—that we are not bound to pay any more, but that Her Majesty's Government have declared that, in future years,

they will not pay for the defence of Egypt.

MR. GOSCHEN: I wish to say two or three words to the Committee in reply to what has been urged by recent speakers. I have already stated that the Egyptian Government is now reconsidering its financial position, and that general expenditure which it will have to meet, after the announcement which has been made to it as to the portion which will be borne by the British Government. The Egyptian Government had expected that we would pay more; and our refusal to pay more than what we considered the fair and equitable claims of that Government has put upon it the necessity of reconsidering its Budget. The Egyptian Government will now have to re-cast its Budget, and to see whether it can, without improperly reducing its Army below safe limits, make both ends meet. If it cannot make both ends meet, then it cannot pay the coupons in full, and international intervention will arise. For it is not the intention of the British Government to endeavour to restore the financial equilibrium of Egypt by imposing further burdens on the British taxpayer. But with regard to an International Commission, let hon. Members not suppose that that would mean the bankruptcy of Egypt and the withdrawal of a portion of the interest from the bondholders. It is to make that point clear that I rise. If an International Commission sat, the result would be that the general management of Egypt would again pass from English hands, and that the reforms which have been inaugurated—those reforms with regard to irrigation, the abolition of the *corvée*, and many other matters in regard to which we have made great progress—would again be interrupted, but it does not follow that bankruptcy would occur. Hon. Members have never been able thoroughly to realize this fact, but it is an important one, that before the International Tribunals the foreign creditors have a *locus standi* against the Egyptian Government, which they have not elsewhere, and that even if we were to retire altogether, and refuse to stir in the slightest degree, the French creditors, or, in fact, any creditors whatever, could sue the Egyptian Government in the International Tribunals, a course which would lead to anarchy and ruin, but which would probably end again in

other Powers protecting the bondholders. I wanted to make it clear—that if an International Commission should sit, it would not necessarily be a disaster to the bondholders, because it is probable that the other Powers would secure them in the terms they have now; but it might have a disastrous effect on the general progress of good government in Egypt, and the restoration of that autonomy which we wish to secure in order to facilitate and expedite the withdrawal of our troops. I hope that this explanation will be gratifying to some hon. Gentlemen who think that this country could by its action alone bring about a state of bankruptcy in Egypt and a reduction of the interest paid to the bondholders.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): It is palpable to anyone, who has taken into consideration what the right hon. Gentleman has said, that the Egyptian Government is considering its financial position; and then we are led to understand that the English troops are going to be withdrawn from Egypt, and, accordingly, when these troops are withdrawn from the country they at present occupy, their places will be filled by Egyptian troops. If that is the case, will not these troops have to be paid for? And will not that, in itself, throw an increased financial responsibility upon the Egyptian Government, which Her Majesty's Government at present are apparently trying to bolster up? If this state of affairs is to continue, and is to go on in the usual cycles which Egyptian affairs at the present time appear to be rolling in, what becomes of all those assurances that we have received this evening, that the Egyptian Government will have to stand or fall by itself? What becomes of the assurances of the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick), when he told us they had made an arrangement for a reduction in the Egyptian Army, as well as of the English Army in Egypt? Why, if you withdraw troops from a country situated as Egypt is at the present time, those troops must be replaced by others. I would ask, can such a reduction take place? What becomes of the statement of the hon. Gentleman this evening? He also told us that measures were taken to promote economy in the Egyptian Army, and amongst the Eng-

lish troops in Egypt. Well, but that appears to me to be strictly at variance with the answer that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just given to my hon. Friend (Sir George Campbell). There appears to me, strangely enough, to be a considerable amount of confusion existing with regard to the item of expenditure which we are asked to pass to-night. Nothing could be more plain and palpable than the statement of the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), when he stood up in his place and brought the Treasury Bench to its senses. Everybody saw the immense confusion which existed on the Treasury Bench—everybody saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer pulling a paper from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), and the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) jumping up and down in his seat. It was palpable that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who had charge of this matter were completely at their wits' end, and that neither of them were certain how far he would go and how far he would not go. Taking into account the remarks made from the front Opposition Bench by the late Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), who asked whether this Vote wipes out all liabilities, and whether it will practically give us in Egypt a clean sheet in our dealings with Egyptian finance, that has not been answered, as many other questions have not been answered. All these questions have been shelved by the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote. He has told us about Suakin. The right hon. Gentleman ought certainly to be conversant with this Vote, and I believe is, to a certain extent, responsible for a portion of it. He asked us what is to become of Suakin. Is it to become a second Mas-sowah? We see the miserable state of things which exists there in consequence of the Italian occupation; but I will not enter into that subject, because it does not come under our consideration; but anyone knowing the terrific bungle that exists with regard to the English occupation and Egyptian finance, and who takes into account this extraordinary demand we are asked to pay to-night, will see clearly—particularly if he has been listening to the debate, or if he reads it to-morrow—will see in the first place

that this Vote is an extraordinary one and an unjust one; and, in the second place, that the British taxpayer should certainly not be called upon to vote what evidently creates so much dissension—or confusion if not dissension—on the Treasury Bench, and which, to my mind, would lead anyone into a state of embarrassment as to how actually the Vote was incurred. We are not given the essential details in regard to it. The right hon. Gentleman stated that too. I went outside and tried in the Library to find some statistics dealing with these matters, and it was impossible to find them. I went from one official to another in the Library and tried to elucidate the matter, but I could find out hardly a single thing in connection with it. It seems to me a strange thing that we are asked to come down here and spend the money of the taxpayer without getting any reliable information as to the details. It is, therefore, with the greatest reluctance that I rise to express my opinion, though it is with the greatest possible pleasure that I shall go into the Lobby, and vote against this extraordinary expenditure.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I do not take part in this discussion with any reluctance, because I think it is the duty of Members of this House to get up as often as they can in Committee of Supply to discuss the Votes. I do not think that hon. Members rise sufficiently often to discuss the Estimates. In the first place no one could be more persuasive than the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer when speaking to us, and nothing could be more lucid than his explanation. At the same time he reminds me of the lady Byron refers to; because, when he said he would never give a subvention to the Egyptian Government he was supporting that Government and giving it a subvention. That was the weak point of the speech—it was necessarily the weak point of it—because he says the subvention ought not to be given, and yet is giving it. I object to the form in which this is put, and I think that it involves a question of vital principle. It should never have been put in the Estimates at all. This Vote is not an Army Vote, and should not have appeared in the Army Estimates. To my mind this Vote is nothing more nor less than a subsidy, and in this country

we have not been accustomed to subsidies, I think, since the early part of the present century—if I am not mistaken, this country has not paid subsidies since 1815. We paid enormous subsidies for many years before that date. But the fresh subsidy has a great many disadvantages, which the old subsidies in the Napoleonic time had not. The old subsidies brought us material consideration in return—so many men, or so much support. But we have nothing of that kind now, and this, I maintain, is a *hocus-pocus* way of drawing the thing up. It is an entanglement that we can make nothing of. What is really happening is this—we are giving them £150,000 in Egypt to meet their general expenses, and we have to find out an excuse for it. The way we do that is to credit the Egyptian Government with £200,000, which the Egyptian Government itself had to pay as a contribution towards the expenses of the Egyptian Army. We say that if the £200,000 cannot be paid by the Egyptian Government, we will write off some extraordinary expenses with regard to services the Egyptian Army have rendered us in Egypt. That is, in reality, nothing more nor less than a figure of speech and a method of coaxing money out of the pockets of the British taxpayer. I am not in a position to protest on behalf of the British taxpayer; but I protest on behalf of the Irish taxpayers, who have to bear a portion of this Vote—probably some £18,000. I must say I think the British taxpayer is very foolish if he pays the rest of the sum demanded without serious complaint. We are paying this money for the pleasure of occupying Egypt. I do not see what advantage we get in return for it. If we could get hold of Egypt altogether and take all her revenues, I have no doubt that it would be a very good thing for Great Britain, if not for that part of the United Kingdom in which I am more especially interested. I think it might be a magnificent thing to take all the revenues of Egypt, and all those geographical advantages which the possession of England would confer upon this country; but I do not think it a magnificent thing to hold Egypt in the way we do now. I do not think it a good thing to keep up an army of mingled blacks and whites, as we do, for the purposes which the right hon. Gentleman opposite de-

scribed. Is it worth while keeping Egypt and spending all this money on the country? I do not think it is. I think that if we could get hold of all the revenues of Egypt and keep them to ourselves, it would be, though very dishonest, expedient. But at the present time we are dishonest, without securing that which is expedient—we are dishonest without doing good to anyone. I do not like this principle of introducing politics into Army Votes if it could be helped, and I think that the Government have thoroughly and entirely introduced politics into Army measures by putting this item in the Army Vote. This item £150,000 has nothing to do with the Army Vote. It should have been put down as special expenses—it should have been described by the Treasury as a payment of £150,000 to get the Egyptian Government out of its difficulties. That would have been at least an honest thing, though it is true that it might not have been very good for electioneering purposes, and I think that the Government, though they may make the country believe that this is an Army expense, will not, in the long run, reap much benefit from the course they are taking. I think that in the end they will find that they have done themselves considerable harm by it. They have thoroughly mixed up all Army Votes with politics for the future, which I think is a great pity, and will cause great injury to the country. I will not say any more with regard to this item at the present time; but when we come to the other items, I hope to be able to say a few more words upon these matters.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): I think there are two parties to be considered in connection with this question of economy—namely, the people of Egypt, as well as the taxpayers of this country. I have not been able to understand from the statement we have heard this evening from the Treasury Bench, whether we are to believe that the Government has permanently abandoned their claim to this allowance of £200,000 on the part of the Egyptian Government for the maintenance of British troops in Egypt. I have not been able to understand whether the Egyptian Government is a consenting party to this arrangement—that is to say, the arrangement wiping out the Egyptian claim for £600,000, in consideration of this grant

of £150,000; but it appears to me that a far more important question than that of mere money is the question of the policy underlying the action of the Government. If this country had made up its mind finally to annex Egypt, then I should say that this delay is defensible; but the footing on which we stand at present in Egypt is not satisfactory to the Egyptian people, or to us, and I think the Committee has a right to demand some statement of policy from the Government with regard to their future action in Egypt. Now, we are told that in future the whole cost of the Egyptian Army is to be borne by Egypt. Well, in connection with that, if Egypt is to pay the whole cost of the Army, is the control of the Egyptian Army to be left in the hands of the Egyptian Government, or is the Egyptian Government to continue to be, as it is at present, merely the Agents of the Army of Occupation? because, after all, it is a misuse of terms to talk of an Egyptian Government. Now, if we honestly intend to leave Egypt, I hold that the policy we are pursuing in Egypt is altogether wrong—especially the policy with regard to the Army. What are you doing with regard to the Egyptian Army? You are destroying its future efficiency—that is to say, its efficiency the moment you leave the country. You are taking out of the hands of the Mahomedan officers the control of that Army, and teaching the men to look to foreign officers—

THE CHAIRMAN: This discussion has become very discursive. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. O'Kelly) is now clearly outside the range of the Motion before the Committee. He must confine his observations to the remission of this contribution from Egypt.

MR. O'KELLY: I thought we were dealing with the grant to the Egyptian Army, and that the Egyptian Army naturally came under our notice; but I will not press that point further than to say this—that if we are to continue to receive from Egypt this sum of £200,000, we can only properly continue to receive it by granting to the Egyptians the right and power of controlling their own Army. Only on that ground could we properly draw from the people of Egypt the expenses of maintaining an Army which at present is existing rather for our benefit than for theirs.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It seems to me that the last observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though it was considerably delayed, was very important. He told us that in future this country would not afford anything in the way of subvention to the Egyptian Government. He told us that, in future, no charges were to be thrown upon the British taxpayer in order to enable the Egyptian Government to balance their Budget. That is all very well with regard to the future; but I would point out that without the present Vote of £150,000 the Egyptian Government would not at the present moment be in a position to balance their accounts. That is proof sufficient that this Vote is in reality a subvention, in order to enable the Egyptian Government to meet their present liabilities. One of their liabilities which requires to be met is the payment due on the coupons, and it is well that people should understand that this is really a subvention at the expense of the taxpayer of this country, in order to enable the Egyptian bondholders to receive money on their bonds. That is clear from the right hon. Gentleman's statement. I must say that the hon. Member the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) has not been able to afford information equally explicit. He has been asked twice over to furnish us with details with regard to this appropriation for Egypt; but he is either unwilling or unable to do so. I suppose he has material somewhere in the papers which would enable him to give details. If he will take trouble to look it up I am sure he will be able to find it. I am sure the officials in the Department have placed in his hands materials to enable him to give an answer. We want him to give us what details he can in order to show us how the sum is arrived at. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War in the last Government (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) asked the question pointedly, and I think the Financial Secretary to the War Department should, at any rate, have attempted to answer the question. He has not done so, I presume, however, that we shall obtain information of some kind or other. If we do not, I shall move that you, Sir, do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I confess, if it be permissible to make the observation, that the appearance of the attendance on this Committee is by no means creditable to the House of Commons. If we were discussing some petty personal question, or if we had a prospect of a scene of excitement, or an All-night Sitting, and if you, Sir, were in any way to be called upon to use your disciplinary powers, we should have all the Benches crowded with excited Gentlemen, whereas, although discussing charges which impose a heavy burden on the people of the country, we have scarcely a score of Members present to listen to the discussion. I have listened to nearly the whole discussion, and I must say that it has left upon my mind, and, I think, upon the minds of a great many others who have listened to it, a most painful and profound impression. I may be wrong; but, while I was in the House, the Secretary of State for War never gave an answer to what I considered the most grave of all the many charges brought against him in connection with this Vote. I heard his answer to the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), that £50,000 was voted by this House for the Army Estimates of this country, and that what remained beyond the necessities of the Army of this country was charged by him to the support of the Army of Egypt. Now, I want to know, is not the voting and discussion of Estimates in this House a grotesque and almost tragic comedy, when the money you vote for one purpose may be devoted to another? We have these Estimates brought before us in all kinds of detail—we have the salaries of every person set forth in these Estimates. We have all the salaries set forth, from that of the gentleman at the head of the Department down to the poor and humble charwoman who gets her 8s. or 10s. a-week. In that way these Estimates show to the public an honest and business-like appearance; but now we are to understand, from the Vote before us to-night, that when we vote money for India, it may be devoted to Egypt, and when we vote money for English troops, it may be devoted to the maintenance of foreign troops. You give money to the Treasury for one purpose, and they have a right to devote it to another. I join with the senior Member

for Northampton in saying that the State which permits what I will call "organized embezzlement," and in that I am merely quoting the words of the Marquess of Salisbury, is a State on the road to rapid financial ruin. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has drawn attention to the spending of public money upon one purpose which was voted for another. My hon. Friend has related a case which occurred under the Third Empire of an official who was charged with organized embezzlement of money. When the French Chancellor of the Exchequer was brought forward as a witness for the defence, and declared that he quite agreed with the conduct of the official, so indignant was the feeling throughout France at this declaration that he had to give in his resignation. And yet we are defending similar action in the House of Commons, where every penny of public money is supposed to be submitted to the strictest scrutiny. I do not care what attitude the Front Bench has taken on the question; we know that Irish Members have a perfectly clear conscience on this matter of Egypt. I believe the strongest appeal I ever made in this House was upon the question of Egypt. It seems to me to be extraordinary conduct on the part of a Conservative Government to take up their present position. If you read the Conservative newspapers and speeches, you will find, whenever the word Egypt is mentioned, high-sounding phrases about the sacrifices we have made in that country; and the question asked whether we are going to give over the control of the country the monopoly of which we have purchased with the lives of British soldiers and the money that has been spent? With regard to these magnificent phrases, it is under the Conservative Party that we are to make a present to the Egyptian people of £200,000, and that because the Egyptian Government has deputed a certain number of Egyptian troops for the defence of Egyptian territory. Why, there was never a more unjustifiable proposal made to the House. I ask this question: Supposing I were to demand £200,000 from the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland; supposing I were to ask for £200,000 for the crofters in Scotland, or a similar sum for the relief of that vast army of

poverty-stricken and despairing wretches who fill our streets? If I made such a demand as that, we all know the haughty reply with which the application would be met. But when it comes to the bondholders of Egypt, they have not only faithful but generous friends in the Government. Do you suppose that this charge is hidden away from the people of this country in the Estimates for the Army, and that the people of this country cannot penetrate those Estimates, and see that, in a time of fearful depression of trade, the taxpayers are asked to subscribe money in order that the bloated bondholders may receive interest under agreement with this country? Sir Evelyn Baring said, in one of his despatches, that the sum required in order to enable the Egyptian Government to meet its legal obligations was about £200,000. Well, I remark that it is an extraordinary coincidence that the sum given by the taxpayers of this country to the Egyptian Government for the Army amounts to exactly the same as that which Sir Evelyn Baring said was required to carry on the Government of Egypt. Does it not seem that this money is not given for Black troops, that it is not given for the garrisoning of Suakin, or for any military purpose, but that it is given to the Government of Egypt to make up the balance due to the bondholders? I hope to see the day when the bondholders will not get any more money, either from Egypt or any other country in the world. Money has been got for the most pernicious purposes from this country; and now, when the people are reduced to a position of the greatest misery, we are asked to take the first step towards increasing the burden on the poor and miserable in this country, who are to put their hands into their pockets to save the bondholders from losing a fraction of interest.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY,
WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK)
(Surrey, Guildford): The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has asked me to explain the deficiency for which this Supplementary Vote is brought forward. The explanation is very simple, and it is that, in framing an estimate for so large a Vote, it is almost impossible to arrive at an absolutely correct forecast of the expenditure which will be incurred. The opi-

nion is that the ultimate expenditure on the Vote will result in a saving of £20,000, and the sum which we put before the Committee is an exact representation of the saving which is expected. It is, therefore, because we have asked for £150,000, and not for £170,000, that we are accused of organized embezzlement. ["No, no!"] There is no concealment, and there is no fraud, and those hon. Members who object to the Estimate will have the power of moving a reduction by the sum of £170,000. I venture to say, looking to the state of the Benches opposite during the greater part of the discussion which has taken place, on which the Opposition has been represented for the last three hours by the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), that if there was any attempt on the part of the Government to palm off such a plan of concealment as has been suggested in the somewhat grotesque speech of the hon. Member opposite, there would have been a very different attendance of the Liberal Party. We have been attacked this evening for bringing this sum forward in a Supplementary Estimate; but, had we put it off to a subsequent period, I think the House would have been entitled to censure us for so doing. I submit that we have made a perfectly clear statement of the whole case. We have put every information in our power before the Committee; we have explained the liabilities which we are endeavouring to meet; and we have no apology whatever to make for the manner in which we have placed our Estimates on the Table of the House.

MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): We have been told almost plaintively of the difficulty, in dealing with so large a Vote of £5,000,000, of making a correct forecast of the amount to be expended. That would have been very fair if we were dealing with the Vote which is to come on later; but the excuse made with reference to this Vote I. is, that there has been an arrangement, as it is lightly called, to transfer to one purpose money that was voted by this House for another. [Mr. BRODRICK: No.] It may not be true, but that is what is said on the Paper—

"This arrangement has caused the deficiency of Appropriations in aid of the Vote."

["No, no!"] I venture to think that

this interruption is out of place. In order that there may be no mistake about the matter I will read the rest of the Paper, which says—

"The Contribution due by the Egyptian Government in respect of the British Army of Occupation has been applied in settlement of Claims for certain extraordinary services of the Egyptian Army undertaken in 1885 and 1886 under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief in Egypt."

That, Sir, is an arrangement of robbing Peter to pay Paul, which has left Peter without money in his pocket, and we have, therefore, to provide him with some more money. I cannot help thinking that it would have been a great deal more to the purpose if, instead of making indignant speeches, the Committee had been given a little more information on this subject, and I venture to think that we should have received that more calmly than the bellicose reply of the Financial Secretary to the War Office.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 96; Noes 149: Majority 53.—(Div. List, No. 54.)

Original Question again proposed.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I think that this discussion should continue, because it is very hard that these Supplementary Estimates should be passed without adequate information being given as to the various items contained therein. I think, in connection with these Estimates, that it would be a matter of satisfaction, not merely to hon. Members on these Benches, but to the country at large, to know, with some degree of precision, on what the money asked for is intended to be spent. We were told just now, in connection with sub-head I., that it is impossible, in dealing with a Vote for a very large amount of expenditure, to make anything like a correct forecast of the whole amount that will have to be paid; but it seems to me extraordinary that, year after year, with regard to everything that is done by us in Egypt, there is a Supplementary Estimate presented. I do not intend to make a long statement; but I desire to have some definite information with regard to the item for Ordnance Stores Subordinate Establishment, and Wages; and, in order to afford the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Department an

opportunity of supplying this to the Committee, I shall move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £35,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £35,000, for Pay of Ordnance Store Subordinate Establishment, and Wages, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—*(Dr. Tanner.)*

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (MR. NORTHCOTE): I think it will be respectful to the Committee to offer a few words of explanation on the subject of this item. My hon. Friend opposite will correct me if I am wrong; but my understanding of this matter is that the original Estimate, as submitted by the Ordnance Department, was reduced by about the sum of £35,000 by the late Government, and this Supplementary Vote is intended to bring it up to the amount originally asked for. It was contemplated by the late Government to make a large reduction in the Ordnance Store Department, and they framed their Estimates in consonance with that idea. Subsequently it became obvious that it would be impossible, or, at all events, undesirable, to make that reduction, and instructions were given accordingly. I may say that, as a matter of fact, when we came into Office, no such substantial reductions had taken place. I think the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Tanner), and the Committee generally, will see that when the Estimates have been framed upon the theory that a very large reduction in the number of men will be made; and when that reduction has not been made, it becomes obvious that one of two things must result—either the original Estimate must be exceeded, or such sweeping reductions must be made as will entirely disorganize the Department. The present First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), then the Secretary of State for War, was not prepared to make such a wholesale reduction in the Ordnance Store Department as would throw it entirely out of gear; hence a Supplementary Estimate became necessary. I may also say that this particular Vote—Vote 9—in respect of which this Supplementary Estimate is asked, is rather handicapped, because it has been swelled a good deal in recent years by what are known as repayment services, the credit for which goes to Vote 12. For instance, as much as one-fourth of the stores provided out of the Vote of Credit

required to be handled. Under the circumstances which I have endeavoured briefly to explain to the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Tanner), this Supplementary Estimate becomes necessary.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Northcote) has given us some explanation; but he has certainly not gone into any details as to this £35,000. It is all important to take into consideration that the words "in Egypt" occur in connection with this Vote; and therefore we should be furnished with the clearest information before we vote the money. The last Vote was for £150,000, and related solely to Egypt, and we are told that this Vote for Ordnance Stores is partly requisite in consequence of Egyptian affairs. I do not want to talk any more about Egypt; but I hope the hon. Member (Mr. Northcote) will inform us as to the stores sent to Egypt. How many stores have been returned from Egypt? I have been informed this very evening that many of the stores sent to Egypt have been returned because they were not wanted.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is travelling altogether wide of the item before the Committee.

DR. TANNER: I was calling attention to the fact that many of the stores sent to Egypt have been returned, because they were of no use there.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wish to point out to the hon. Member that this item is for pay.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I should like the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Northcote) to give us an explanation of the expression he made use of a few minutes ago. This year's Report of the Auditor General on the Appropriation Account, both of the Army and Navy, is a most important one. In the Report as to the Army, the Auditor General points out that a very considerable amount of the Vote of Credit was expended on something that occurred long after all danger of war with Russia had passed away.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman (Dr. Cameron) has not attended the Committee, or else he would know that I have impressed upon the Committee that this discussion is not relevant to the Vote.

DR. CAMERON: I am now going to ask a question that is particularly rele-

vant to the Vote. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Northcote) told us that the Vote under discussion was swelled in consequence of one-fourth of the stores provided for out of the Vote of Credit still requiring to be handled. This item relates to the year ending March 31, 1887. All danger of a rupture with Russia was at an end in 1885; and what I wish to ask is, how it happens that this particular Vote is increased in consequence of that Vote.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I should like to bring before the Committee a matter which is also strictly pertinent to the Vote. Five or six years ago I referred to the question of the pay of the officers of the Ordnance Store Department. These officers were not getting as much pay as the Commissariat officers. The Ordnance officers considered themselves entitled to as much pay as their brothers of the Commissariat. I should like to know whether this Vote has anything whatever to do with the pay of the Ordnance officers? If you really wish to do justice to these officers, who are a very valuable body of men, you ought to level them up in pay and promotion to the Commissariat officers.

MR. H. S. NORTHCOTE: I am not aware that this item includes any increase of the pay of the officers of the Ordnance Department; but I know it does include the pay of a certain number of civilians, who were temporarily employed in Ordnance Service in consequence of the fact that, owing to the pressure caused by the Vote of Credit, the ordinary staff was not sufficient to get through the work. As to the question put by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) with regard to the handling of the stores, I may say there was an unusually large amount of work thrown upon the Department in connection with the shipment of stores for Egypt. I may add that, after all, this Estimate only brings up the Vote to the original amount.

DR. CAMERON: I do not think the hon. Gentleman has caught my point. I do not wish to discuss the Vote of Credit, or to dwell upon the way in which it was spent; but an important point in connection with it arises on this particular Vote. The Vote of Credit was given by this House partly in view of

matters in Egypt, and partly in view of matters in India. The circumstances which led to that Vote passed away in 1885; and now we come to deal with a Vote which is applicable to services incurred between the 31st of March last and the 31st of March of the present year. What I want to know is, how the handling of stores purchased out of the Vote of Credit necessitates any increase in the particular Vote before the Committee for the year 1886-7? It seems to me that the general explanation of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. S. Northcote) is a little inconsistent with this particular item, for he has told us that when the Estimate was originally framed by his Department, and submitted to the then Secretary of State for War (Mr. W. H. Smith), it embraced this very sum of £35,000, which was cut out, and which it is now proposed to reinstate.

MR. H. S. NORTHCOTE: I must take entire exception to the proposition or suggestion the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Cameron) makes that the effect of the Vote of Credit has passed away. There has been a great deal of expenditure in connection with the Vote of Credit, the effect of which we are, I am sorry to say, still feeling. This particular item for the Ordnance Store Department is one of the obvious effects of the Vote of Credit.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway): I do not think it is quite satisfactory for the Committee to know that the Ordnance Store Department is now in such an inefficient condition that, in times of pressure, it is not able to discharge its work without enlisting the services of civilians. The Store Department has chiefly to deal with guns and gunpowder, and, therefore, it is difficult to train civilians all at once to the duties of the Department. If, in time of pressure, you are obliged to engage civilians, I cannot think the Department is in the condition the country has a right to expect it shall be kept in.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I should like to ask the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote) if there is any likelihood of the War Office arriving during the present financial year—if they have not yet arrived—at a decision with regard to the ultimate re-organization of that portion of military administration which concerns these Store officers. I understand

the proposal is to transfer all the officers whose pay is included in this Vote to the Department of a high military officer. At present these officers are under the Surveyor General; it is, I believe, in contemplation to give every General in the field a Staff officer—a kind of Chief of the Staff—who shall be responsible for the supply of all stores to the Army. It is intended that clothing, transport, and stores shall be under the responsible control of one officer, who shall be, as it were, the right-hand man of the General commanding. I should like to ask the Surveyor General if he can inform the Committee as to the point which has now been reached in the settlement of this question, and whether this increase of the Vote really does represent any advance in the line I have indicated, or whether this is purely an increase which might have been foreseen?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The question to which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. O'Connor) has referred will not be settled during the present financial year.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Mr. Chairman, I fell into a mistake just now. I referred to the Ordnance Department instead of to the pay of the Ordnance officers. The hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance, in answering the question which I put to him at the outset, told us just now that in the last financial year they made a wholesale reduction in the Ordnance Department. Well, Sir, it seems to me very strange—

MR. H. S. NORTHCOTE: I said that if the original Estimate had been adhered to, we should have had to make reductions which would have completely disorganized the Department. We decided not to do that; hence the necessity for this Supplementary Estimate.

DR. TANNER: I am glad I misunderstood the hon. Gentleman, because I found great difficulty in reconciling the statement with that he made subsequently—namely, that one-fourth of the stores required still further handling in order that they might be used. If that is the case it would be perfectly impossible to reduce the staff, and therefore reduce the pay. But having regard to the whole of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, I cannot help thinking that though this is a very small item, it

shows how matters stand and affords many of us a slight indication of the reasons why the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) resigned his Office.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): Will any hon. Gentleman sitting on the Treasury Bench inform the Committee how much of this £35,000 has been paid to the official whose business it is to test the weapons that are placed in the hands of the men of the Army and Navy?

MR. E. STANHOPE: None.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): Perhaps it is not very surprising that a number of very extraneous considerations have been imported into the discussion of this Vote. The Vote is a very simple one. It arises, as the explanatory note states, in consequence of the difficulty felt at the commencement of the financial year in estimating its requirements. That difficulty was stated by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). He informed the House that his Estimates had been framed on the supposition that it would be possible at some early day to reduce the Forces then in Egypt to 8,000 men. My right hon. Friend also stated with equal frankness, that in the event of not being able to effect that reduction, it would be necessary to trouble the House with a Supplementary Estimate like that now before us.

Question put and *negatived*.

Original Question again proposed.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I should like to ask exactly what this money taken in respect of Vote 12 is for?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not think we ought to be asked to pass this Vote without some further explanation. We have no explanation why the Navy want this £200,000. There is another item—£8,400—for the extension of the Nile Railway. I want to know why the British Government pay for the extension of the Nile Railway, and not the Egyptian Government? Neither can I understand why the British Government should pay for the defence works on the Nile. Then, again, why should we be called upon to pay £300 for railways and piers at Suakin? There is a charge of £24,300 for hut accommodation in the Soudan. I should like to know whether

that accommodation is for European or Native troops? There is a charge of £30,000 as an instalment of £110,000 for the Brennan torpedo, which certainly requires explanation.

MR. H. S. NORTHCOTE: I can assure the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) that there is not the slightest disinclination on our part to ask the House to vote any money without our giving all the information it is in our power to give. With regard to the first item, I may say that out of the £200,000 which, as the footnote states, is required for the Admiralty, £100,000 is to pay for an extra supply of quick-firing ammunition for the Navy, the demand for which was made upon us in December last. A further sum of £50,000 is for Nordenfelt ammunition for the Navy, and £35,000 has been spent on account of chase-hooping for certain guns—a service undertaken by the War Department on behalf of the Navy in consequence of the Report of the Collingwood Committee. As regards the remaining £15,000, £10,000 appears under the head of Accoutrements. These are Militia accoutrements, the supply of which is very much in arrear. I am afraid I cannot give much information as to the £5,000; but I believe the greater portion of it, has been spent upon the Ordnance vessel, the *Marquess of Hartington*. With regard to the other items of the Vote, they have been generally incurred in consequence of the pressure at Enfield for the new rifles, expenses of chase-hooping, and providing Nordenfelt ammunition. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) has asked me for an explanation of the item for £8,400 for the extension of the Nile Railway, with regard to which I may state that this sum has been incurred on account of local charges—staff, working expenses, and maintenance. The Government have not been able to complete their arrangements for handing over the line to the Egyptian Government as soon as was expected. With regard to the item for hut accommodation, I point out that this was rendered necessary by the continued stay of our Forces in Egypt, and the work was undertaken purely on sanitary grounds and for the preservation of the health of those Forces.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I should like the hon. Gentleman to state whe-

the Assouan and Wady Halfa Railway has been handed over to the Egyptian Government?

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Ports-mouth): I see that we are asked to pay the sum of £30,000 as an instalment of the sum of £110,000 for the Brennan torpedo, to the payment of which this House will be committed if the sum asked for is Voted. I object to this Vote, because I consider it is one which ought not to have been brought forward in a Supplementary Estimate at all, but in the regular Estimates of the year, when the House would have the opportunity of being consulted on the matter. I do not think it is good policy to pay away large sums of money in this way, however good the invention may be, and I have no doubt that the Brennan torpedo is one of the best that has been brought forward. But, after what has happened at Chatham recently, what security have we that the invention will be kept secret? I think it would have been better if the Government had paid a royalty to Mr. Brennan for making the torpedo, than that they should have agreed to pay this lump sum. Everyone will know what is the principle of this torpedo, and when once it is known I am satisfied that engineers in other countries will be quite as well able to work out the details as we can. I think it right to ask the Committee to object to the payment of the large sum we are asked for on account of this torpedo.

Motion made and Question proposed,
“That the Item of £30,000, Instalment of £110,000, Payment for the Brennan Torpedo, be omitted from the proposed Vote.”—(*Sir William Crossman*.)

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I ask, Mr. Courtney, whether it would be competent to go back to a Vote previous to that on which the hon. Member moves a reduction?

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I ask whether I shall be able to go back to Vote 12 after this Amendment to Vote 15 is disposed of?

THE CHAIRMAN: It will not be in Order to move to omit Vote 12.

MR. STOREY: But, Sir, I want to move its omission?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman has lost his opportunity.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I ask, Mr. Courtney, whether it would not be competent to the hon. Member for

Sunderland (Mr. Storey) to go back to an earlier Vote if the hon. and gallant Member for Portsmouth withdraws his Motion?

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no objection to that course, if the Committee is willing.

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN: I am willing to ask leave to withdraw my Amendment on the understanding that it is competent to me to revert to the matter.

MR. STOREY: I beg to move "That you do now leave the Chair."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Storey.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. E. STANHOPE): I presume, Sir, that the Motion of the hon. Member is made for the purpose of turning the whole proceedings of the Committee into ridicule. It is surely not too much to ask the Committee to dispose of these Votes to-night. The Government do not desire in any way to restrict discussion on the Votes, although I am bound to say that there seems to be an indication on the part of some hon. Members that they do not share the desire of the Government to get forward with the Business of the country. The Committee will, I think, understand that although the Government have no desire to prevent *bond fide* discussion, it is impossible to allow discussion to take place on Votes that have been passed.

MR. STOREY: I came into the House having a strong objection to several items of the Vote. The hon. Member for Portsmouth (Sir William Crossman) moved the omission of the item for the Brennan torpedo. I asked whether it would be competent for me to move the omission of a previous Vote? Upon your informing me, Sir, that I could not, I moved that you leave the Chair. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, upon that, thought it necessary to instruct the Committee that I, who am a Member of this Parliament, desired to make these proceedings ridiculous. I beg to inform the right hon. Gentleman that he cannot with any decency impute to me that I have ever shown the least approach to casting ridicule upon the proceedings of this House. If I have an objection to a previous Vote, surely I may ask the hon. Mem-

ber who has moved an Amendment to give place so that I may have an opportunity of moving an Amendment to that Vote. If the right hon. Gentleman thinks he can defend these Votes, why does he object to my having an opportunity of protesting against them? After the manner in which my proposal has been met, I adhere to my Motion, Mr. Courtney, that you do now leave the Chair.

COLONEL NOLAN: I was going to discuss Vote 13 in regular order, and for that purpose I rose at the same time as the hon. and gallant Member for Portsmouth. It was stated that the hon. and learned Member for Chatham was going to speak on the Vote for the Brennan torpedo; but if we had understood that he was about to move its omission we should have intervened. I put it to the Government, who have great influence with their supporters, to consider that a very natural mistake has been made, and to allow the Motion of the hon. Member for Portsmouth to be withdrawn. We wish to divide on the Question before the Committee as a protest; and if the Government do not allow the Motion on the Torpedo Vote to be withdrawn, I think that my hon. Friend ought to adhere to his Motion that the Chairman leave the Chair.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I recognize the fact that the hon. Member who moved that the Chairman leave the Chair has not been offering any obstruction; and if the Committee are willing, I am quite ready to agree to the withdrawal of the Motion of the hon. Member for Portsmouth.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I hope the Committee will consider for one moment the peculiar circumstances in which we stand with reference to this Vote. This is not an ordinary Supplementary Vote. It is usual to have each Supplementary Vote submitted separately to the Committee. You have each Question separately put from the Chair; but, to-night, you have one Vote covering a multiplicity of Services which are all bulked together. Now, when the hon. Member for Portsmouth moved the reduction of the last item, it was no longer competent for another hon. Member to go back and move the reduction of an earlier item. That difficulty being seen, the hon. Member for Portsmouth courteously consented to withdraw his Mo-

tion, and on the question of the assent of the House for the withdrawal of that Motion we saw—what no one has ever witnessed before here—the courtesy which hon. Gentlemen principally concerned was willing to concede to him was refused by Her Majesty's Government. The simple result of that was that it was no longer competent for anyone to go back to any one of the earlier Votes and move the reduction of that Vote. The only course open to a Member in such circumstances is to move the reduction of the entire Vote, and if he does that there is nothing to prevent a cross discussion of a number of varied subjects, so that it would be hopeless for an hon. Member to secure the discussion of a particular item he desired to challenge. During all the years I have sat in this House I have never seen on the part of a Government anything so nearly approaching an appearance at any act of discourtesy as the action of Her Majesty's Government in regard to this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, apparently taking credit for his recovered urbanity when he consented just now to withdraw opposition to the proposal, was good enough to say that if the request had been made by some other Member than the particular Member who made it, he should not have been inclined to withdraw his opposition. All I can say is that, though we may not be particularly glad to see the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) the Leader of the House, and though we may not be particularly delighted to see the First Lord of the Treasury Leader of the House, still we have learned that either of these right hon. Gentlemen could be replaced with considerable disadvantage.

MR. STOREY: I beg, Mr. Courtney, to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN: I beg leave also to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I think we have got to the stage when it is necessary to convince right hon. Gentlemen who sit on the opposite side that there is a real and serious disposition on this side of the House to protest against these Supplementary Estimates. I am sorry that I was not in my place

at an earlier hour in the evening, when the Vote I am about to speak upon was proposed. But so far as Vote 12 is concerned—I understand we have passed Vote 9—I intend to earn to-night the undying thanks of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War by moving one by one the omission of each item—each item except one. There is one item as to which I intend to make no opposition—namely, No. 5—which is a proposal of £5,000 for the War Department officials. I understood the hon. Gentleman who explained the Vote to say that this was probably a proposal for the improvement of the *Marquess of Hartington*; and I am so sensible of the necessity of that operation that I do not propose to object to the item. With respect, however, to the rest, I intend, if I can get another hon. Gentleman to tell with me, to trouble the House with a Division upon these items one by one. I intend to divide in order to indicate our sense that these Supplementary Estimates should not run to such enormous sums. Without making any further speech, I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £60,000, "D. for wages."

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): Before you put that, Sir, I rise to a point of Order. I wish to know, if the hon. Member moves to reduce this Vote by £60,000, he will be able to move the reduction of £70,000 later on. I am afraid he is moving rather wrongly. Will he be able to move the rejection of the £70,000 if his present Motion is put to the House?

THE CHAIRMAN: There will be no difficulty whatever in moving that.

Motion made, and Question put,

"That the item of £60,000, Wages, under Vote 12, be omitted from the proposed Vote."
—(Mr. Storey.)

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 101; Noes 194: Majority 93.—(Div. List, No. 55.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): The very substantial minority which supported the Amendment I made shows that there is, not only on the part of the Irish Members, but on the part of the Radical Members representing constituencies in England, Scotland, and Wales, a serious objection to these continued efforts of the Government to increase ordinary Estimates

by large additional Estimates. Now, I, for one, am disposed to meet in the amplest spirit the compliment which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War paid me a little while ago. He was good enough to say that if some other hon. Member on this side of the House had asked him to waive his opposition he would not have done so. It was very kind of him, I am sure, to say that; but I can assure him that other hon. Members on this side of the House are very much the same kind of men that I am. They are not much better and they are not much worse. They are all animated just as much as he is with the desire to advance the Business of this House. [*Cries of "Oh, oh!"*] Yes; and to give to the Ministry of the day, be it Liberal or Conservative, sufficient means. But we certainly object to the grossly extravagant tendencies of Governments, be they Liberal or be they Tory. I made a threat, and I beg pardon for having done so. I said I should divide on this Vote, item by item, except that for the *Marquess of Hartington*. Well, I am so sensible of the real necessity there is for the Government to get on with Business, that I intend to sacrifice my character for consistency to my character for business, and therefore I am content to let the items G, H, R, V, W, and Y go by the board. Nobody wishes to go on with Vote 12. Vote 13 consists of totals which relate entirely to expenditure for Egypt, and I want the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Bench opposite to realize that in my protest against this expenditure for Egypt I am absolutely consistent. I voted against the Liberal Government going to Egypt, and I voted against the Tory Government spending money in Egypt, and I therefore take the liberty of objecting to this Vote. Now there are six items, and it would be possible for me, I believe, to take a vote upon each one of them. I have not, however, the smallest intention of doing that. I wish to make my protest in the shortest manner possible; but I want hon. Gentlemen opposite to know that there is a protest to be made from these Benches by men who sincerely believe that to take money from the taxpayers of this country and spend it on all sorts of objects in Egypt, when we need money so much at home, is an inappropriate manner of spending money. I wish,

Mr. Storey

therefore, to move that the whole sum of £44,000 be omitted.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): No; leave them £4,000.

MR. STOREY: My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Galway, whose liberality we all appreciate so much, says, I ought only to move the reduction of the Vote by £40,000 and give the Government £4,000. If I thought I was likely to carry my Motion I would accede to this suggestion and give the Government £4,000, but as I know I cannot carry it and all we can do is to make a protest, I wish to move that the whole sum be rejected. In doing this I would only take the liberty to call the attention of the younger Members of the Conservative Party from whom I have most hope—I have absolutely no hope from the present Leaders of the Conservative Party, who are past praying for—but I say I will take the liberty of saying to the younger Members of the Party below the Gangway that if they dream that the sum of £50,000 that has been so willingly voted for Egypt is the total sum that we have expended as taxpayers this year in Egypt, they are very much mistaken. Apart from the grant in aid for the expedition to the Soudan we have spent already through the ordinary Estimates—and if this has been brought out before, I beg pardon, but I think it will bear reiterating—a sum of £232,000, and that apart from the money we are now asked to Vote to the Egyptian Government—namely, £258,000. In addition to this £232,300 and £258,000 the Government propose that for one little peddling thing or another, we should expend a further sum of £44,000. Sir, I think it absolutely necessary that the Liberals in this House should object to this continuous expenditure, and therefore, without further observation, I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £44,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the item of £44,000, Charges in Egypt, under Vote 13, be omitted from the Vote."—
(*Mr. Storey*.)

COLONEL NOLAN: I am anxious to support the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) to the extent of £39,900. I consider that £4,100 which is put down for barracks in Egypt is necessary, because if you have troops in Egypt you must have barracks. I also think that

the sum spent for telegraphs, £500, is very moderate, and that the sum of £300 for railways and piers at Suakin is also very moderate, and that it is a very necessary expense so long as we remain there. I consider these items very reasonable, but when we come to the big items I must say that they appear to me to be very objectionable, and all in the same spirit. There is the item for the expenses of the Nile Railway. If we are going to spend money on the Nile Railway, it looks very much like a bad argument for our leaving that country. I consider that such expenditure as this keeps us in Egypt. Then there is an item for advancing works on the Nile. If these were field works thrown up at a small cost in men and labour by the troops for the purpose of a single campaign, I should not object; but as they are extensive works, they appear very much like permanent fortifications, and people do not build permanent fortifications if they are going to leave a country. Ministers pay very small attention to what foreign diplomatists say, but diplomatists in each country pay very great attention to what they see each other do in the matter of constructing fortifications and works in their own country. Such things are looked upon as serious preparations. I have here £24,000 for "hut" accommodation for the hot season. Well, it is decidedly a hot place. I have been in a similar latitude on the shores of the Red Sea, and no doubt it is very necessary to take measures to protect the troops against the severity of the climate; but the word "hut" is a very doubtful term, under which you may be building a splendid barracks. I have spoken to two or three experts on this subject, and I have come to the conclusion that tents would do very well—tents such as are used in India. You can always move them, and when you have done with them in a certain place, they will be valuable for the same purpose elsewhere. But this is not the case with huts, for when you are done with them you will, in all probability, have to sell them; and you are not likely to get more than £1,000 for that which has cost you £24,000. I am of opinion that the Government ought to provide our troops with suitable accommodation and with proper protection in hot weather from the sun; but I think this might be done by means of tents. I

should like some explanation on the subject.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I should like to ask hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House if they were aware when they originally supported English intervention in Egypt that they would be called upon to pay for telegraphs in Egypt; that they would be called upon to pay for railways, to pay for defence works, to pay for railways and piers at Suakin, and to pay for the erection and maintenance of barracks in Egypt? I should like to ask them whether they do not think it is time that something should be done to prevent this wicked policy being carried on any longer in Egypt? It is high time, in my opinion, that the inexpedient policy which we are pursuing in Egypt should be stopped; it is as wicked as it is absurd. There have been two great crimes perpetrated against liberty. The first one was the attempt of the French Government to crush the Italian Government; and the second was the attempt of the right hon. Gentleman on this side of the House to crush the aspirations of the Egyptians for self-government, and to bring about the policy we are now asked to provide money for continuing. I agree with every point mentioned by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Holborn Division of Finsbury (Colonel Duncan) except one, and that is his estimate of Arabi Pasha.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to discuss that part of the subject.

DR. CLARK: Having got over the historical portion, I now come to the point. The only method of preventing this and other sums of money being taken from the poor British taxpayer, is to undo the work as far as we can, to recall Arabi, and to allow the Egyptians to govern themselves and to pay for their own Government. We are now paying for railways and other things in Egypt that we ought not to pay for. Of course we must pay for them as long as we keep, by our bayonets, power over Egypt. The sooner we allow the Egyptian patriots now in exile to return and to establish a stable government founded upon the wishes of the Egyptian people the better.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I venture to ask the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey)

whether it is not inexpedient to take a Division in regard to sums 75 per cent of which has already been paid away? I do not see what good we can do by going to a Division which would simply be a waste of time, and I trust he will not put hon. Gentlemen to such unnecessary inconvenience.

MR. COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe): I should like to ask a few questions with regard to two items. First of all, I should like some explanation as to the extension of the Nile Railway. I should like to know, for instance, whether the charge of £8,400 is a preliminary to a further charge? Does it mean that we are going to run large railways up the Nile, or does it mean that these railway works are already completed? If they are already completed, I should like to know how it is that the sum expended upon them has not been estimated before; if they are not completed, I should like to know how far this charge is to commit the country to further expenditure? Then, again, as to the hut accommodation in the Soudan, I thought we were out of the Soudan; and I should like to know from some authority whether we are still building huts in the Soudan, or whether huts have been built and abandoned? It is right in regard to these two items that something more should be given than a mere general explanation.

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. H. S. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter): I am afraid the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield can hardly have been in his place when I spoke upon the items of this Vote half-an-hour ago, and then explained that the £8,400 for what is called the extension of the Nile Railway was for local charges for the staff, working expenses, and maintenance; that the railway had been in our military occupation, but that arrangements had been made for its transfer to the Egyptian authorities. With regard to the £7,200 for defence works on the Nile, I may say again that expenditure was incurred in the erection of defence works undertaken on the responsibility of the General Officer commanding, and with the view of securing the Egyptian Force against attack. £24,300 is the charge for hut accommodation. That, I may say, in answer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan), as

well as to the hon. Member for the Attercliffe Division of Sheffield (Mr. Coleridge) is an expense originally sanctioned in 1885. The huts were recommended by the medical officer.—[Colonel NOLAN: What kind of huts?] I am afraid, without referring to documents, I cannot say what kind of huts they were, but I know they were recommended by the medical officer. I am not as conversant with the subject as the hon. and gallant Member. In answer to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, I may say that the huts were mainly erected at Assouan, Korosko, and Wady Halfa.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not want to prolong this debate, but I wish to say that I am very much opposed to keeping our troops in Egypt; but I am of opinion that while they are there they ought to be properly protected. I differ from the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) in the suggestion that the troops should be kept under canvas. I can conceive no greater barbarity than putting men under canvas in hot climates. We are assured that this £24,300 has been spent upon the protection of our troops, and therefore I do not begrudge it, but I press for an answer as to whether the Wady Halfa Railway has now been transferred to the Egyptian Government.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn): These huts were of the very simplest description; but the fact of their being built at the top of hills, and that the carriage of sun-dried bricks from below and the labour connected with their erection being very great, accounts, in great measure, for the extent of this charge. As to putting men under canvas, I may say that the first week I was on the heights of Assouan with two battalions, our tents were blown down twice in the night in dust storms.

MR. STOREY: No one can realize better than I can the circumstances to which my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Duncan) has alluded, because when he went up to Assouan I had the honour of going with him; but I went up after the death of the late lamented General Gordon, and a great calm fell on that part of the country immediately after we got so far. I quite admit that if our troops are to be there they ought

to be cared for. I know the good service my hon. and gallant Friend did in that part of the world, and I do not at all object if you will send your men there to make them comfortable. I think it my duty, however, to make a protest against the whole policy of spending our money in that region. I do not think I need say anything more. The hon. Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson) asked me why I should take the trouble to protest the money having been spent? This is an objection every spendthrift makes.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I said that the money had already been paid away.

MR. STOREY: But why, in the name of goodness, should the House of Commons be asked to find it? We are supposed to be the custodians of the public purse. An unattached Member like the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Isaacson) might rise, but a Minister would not rise and defend a Vote on the ground that the money had been spent. Parliament has the right to say what money shall be spent, and it is because I feel that this money ought not to have been spent that I, without any more prolixity, make my protest.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I am not able altogether to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland upon his appeal to hon. Members sitting below the Gangway opposite. His appeal, like many similar appeals which have been made in times past, appears to me to have fallen on barren, desert ground, and I sincerely hope that we shall find no other appeals made to these hon. Members. Now, I certainly thought that upon these items in this Vote we ought to receive more explanation. We are here to see that money is not thrown away; and I think that my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan), who has direct and technical experience in connection with the conduct of military affairs, showed very clearly that what can be done in India can be done in Egypt. We all know that the Indian climate is hotter than that of Egypt, and that what can be done in the one country with good effect and economy can be done in the other. I maintain that instead of throwing money away in building permanent residences for troops who are shortly to

be withdrawn, instead of building these suburban villas, mere temporary residences would have been quite as effective in guarding the troops against the dangers peculiar to the Egyptian climate. [*Cries of "Divide, divide!"*] Mr. Courtney, of course I cannot help the interruptions of hon. Gentlemen. It is very difficult to get through one's remarks, but I shall endeavour to do so. Now, as to the Engineer Department, we have heard of a great many of its faults and of its failures. The sum that is asked for in respect of this Department is only £1,700, but it is part of the money which has been thrown away. I will draw attention to one particular item in connection with the Vote before us, upon which, for my own part, I should have preferred to have taken a distinct Division, and that is the item for the extension of the Nile Railway. Now the Suakin and Wady Halfa Railway has had a very chequered career, and I cannot see that it will prove of any advantage to this country or to Egypt. For this railway we are asked to provide £8,400, and that is the second largest item in this Vote No. 13. I consider that if we palm off this ill-conceived concern upon the Egyptian Government we shall be doing them a great wrong. [*Interruption.*] [An hon. MEMBER: Sit down!]

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Mr. Courtney, I rise to Order. I want to ask you whether the expression just used by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kennington (Mr. Gent-Davis) of "sit down" is a Parliamentary expression?

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr. Tanner.

DR. TANNER: Well, Sir, I do not in the least pay attention to the expressions of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but I do pay attention to expressions of hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House. It is not my intention at all to weary the Committee, and I will pass from this Wady Halfa Railway, on which there is a great deal that might be said—we have got at least two Blue Books full of technical information concerning it, and which might be highly instructive to hon. Gentlemen opposite. I can assure hon. Gentlemen that if they wish enlightenment upon the question, I shall be very happy to give it them; but, Sir, it is not my intention. I merely wish to enter my protest, as a Member of this

House, against what I consider to be an ill-considered undertaking. I now pass to the question of the defence works on the Nile. Now, what are these defence works like? We all know that in Eastern lands, when civilized forces are endeavouring to protect themselves against the attacks of a savage and uncivilized foe, they, as a rule, will take advantage of the material which nature places at their hand. I must say that although many Members may consider the Soudanese savages, I do not regard them as such—I look upon them as free men fighting for their own rights and their own native land. Still, when the Soudanese attacked convoys passing up the Nile, it became a matter of absolute necessity to throw up defence works, and I think that those defence works ought to have been cheap enough. Everybody who knows anything about Egypt knows that sand is a very cheap commodity. What are earthworks in other parts of the world are, practically speaking, only sandworks in Egypt; accordingly, when we take into consideration the facilities which were at the command of the Military Authorities in constructing these defence works, we can very easily see that the expenditure ought not to have been great. I very respectfully ask the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote), who is piloting this Vote through Committee, to give us a little further information upon the details of this Vote; because I cannot understand why, in a country like Egypt, where labour is easily had, and where, as I have said, materials are plentiful, there should have been such a large expenditure upon defence works. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] Mr. Courtney, I do not yield to the expressions of hon. Gentlemen; if they wish for further information I will give it them. But I will content myself by merely expressing a hope that the Government will give us the information we desire, and that information which I am sure the country will look for to-morrow morning.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): I think the Committee has a right to some further explanation with regard to the Nile Railway. For my own part, I cannot understand why the taxpayers of this country are called upon to pay any money towards erecting or maintaining that line. The Wady Halfa Railway

was constructed for the benefit and in the interest of Egypt. If I understand aright, the railway becomes the property of the Egyptian Government. Under these circumstances, it would be only fair that the Egyptian Government should defray the expenses entailed by the railway.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): This Vote, ostensibly for military purposes, is, according to the opinion of those who sit on these Benches—who are a great deal better qualified than myself to speak upon it—a Vote in which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a direct personal interest. Inasmuch as—

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I wish the hon. Member to state distinctly and specifically what he means by what he says.

MR. BLANE: The opinion of a number of hon. Members on these Benches is this—that the right hon. Gentleman has been connected with the firm that floated those loans for the redemption of which this money is now wanted.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is travelling wide of the mark. His remarks have no relevancy whatever to the present Vote.

DR. TANNER: I should like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, whether the hon. Member for Kennington (Mr. Gent-Davis) is in—

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. GOSCHEN: I trust the Committee will permit and compel the hon. Member for South Armagh, who has made this statement, to state distinctly what he means. It is not enough for the hon. Member to say that it is the impression amongst hon. Members on those Benches. When he retails calumny and slander, I want to know what he means in specific terms.

MR. SEXTON here rose. [*Loud cries of "Order!" and interruption.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Mr. Sexton.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to submit to you, Sir, in regard to what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just said, that my hon. Friend stated that an opinion prevailed on these Benches on a certain question; and he stated the grounds for that impression. [*Cries of "No, no!"*]

He stated what, in his opinion, the grounds were. [*Cries of "No, no!"*] Yes; he gave his opinion. I beg to say and submit to you, Mr. Courtney, that whatever this Committee may permit my hon. Friend to add, this Committee has no power to compel him.

MR. BLANE: I would just say this for the benefit of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that it is an impression upon these Benches—and not only that, but I have seen it stated in the Press—that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was one of the firm that floated certain loans; and that this money, which was being voted ostensibly for military purposes, will be turned over to pay the bondholders. [*Laughter, and cries of "Withdraw!"*] Well, if I am wrong, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will explain. I have heard the charge made repeatedly that this very railway that we are asked to vote money for in Committee was partly built by money furnished by a certain firm to which he was connected.

MR. GOSCHEN: I have repeated, over and over again, that the loans from the old firm with which I was connected were made 22 years ago. The hon. Member speaks now as if I had a personal interest in the matter. Not only have I no interest now in these loans, but the firm has no interest in them. Neither directly nor indirectly have I, for years, had the slightest personal interest in Egyptian finance. I have repeated that, as I have said, many times; and I trust, now that I have repeated it once more, that hon. Members below the Gangway will not continue to re-assert charges which I have met over and over again.

MR. BLANE: So far as this Vote is concerned, I accept the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A great many people who are better informed than I am—I am not able to speak for them, but I know that they have that impression—certainly think that what I have stated is the fact. There is one item connected with this Vote that I would call attention to—that for the Royal Engineers. The charge in respect of the Royal Engineers is for the defence of the people of Egypt. What is the use of making a charge for these men in the Votes relating to England if the men are to be paid over again to the ex-

tent of over £7,100? Why should they receive this extra amount, seeing that their services are already paid for? As has been already pointed out, these charges show that we are not going to leave Egypt at all. The fact that we have been building huts in Egypt show that we are going to stay there, and that we are preparing to prevent the invasion of the territory. I am very much afraid that before very long we shall have a repetition of those terrible scenes in the Soudan which have already very seriously shocked the civilized world. I protest against this Vote, inasmuch as it is to be used against a people rightly struggling to be free, and is for Egyptian officials, to whose interest it is to exact money from England for their own people. I say that the taxpayers in this country have quite sufficient to do in looking after their own affairs, without taking over the affairs of the Soudan and Egypt. If we have to leave Egypt in the end, we shall have to leave all these buildings and improvements behind, and probably some other Power will reap advantage from them. It is very problematical whether the English people will ever reap advantage. I maintain that we have quite enough to do with our own people here, without taking upon our shoulders the affairs of the people of Egypt and the Soudan.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): The Committee will naturally be indulgent to those Members of the House who have uniformly and consistently protested against our intrusion in the affairs of Egypt; but surely it is hardly business-like in us, when we are called on to support a policy which has been carried out and approved of by majorities in this House, to shut our eyes to responsibilities incurred by successive Governments in giving effect to that policy. The Nile Railway, an item in this Vote, which has been pretty generally criticized, was a railway made and maintained for military purposes. Twelve months ago the requisitions and demands that were made for locomotives and plant of every kind required for upholding that railway and putting it into a state of effectiveness were enormous. I felt it to be my duty when in Office, in connection with the Secretary of State, to procrastinate in regard to these demands; and it was a matter of great satisfaction to us that we were

able to avoid large expenditure and some outlay which, if it had been incurred, would have necessitated a much larger Supplementary Estimate than that now before us. Much has been said with regard to the hut accommodation provided in the Soudan—and I gather from the observations of the hon. Gentleman who has last spoken that he means Assouan. Well, the House will recall the fact that a great amount of interest was excited in the country last year with regard to the condition of our troops on that station; indeed, for a time, this House was continually occupied with Questions which indicated the very grave concern that was being felt with regard to the manner in which these troops—many of them very young and extremely unfitted for the severity of the climate—were being treated. It is perfectly natural—it is more than that, it is obligatory—on the part of the Government to provide suitable accommodation for these men. All that I can say as to these figures is that I think the Committee may feel some sense of relief that the demand which is now made is not a larger one. It is a charge which could not have been anticipated by those of us in charge of the administration of this Department twelve months ago; due notice, however, was given last year that some supplementary demand would be necessary, and I cannot believe that the Committee will now refuse to meet it.

MR. STOREY: As the Mover of the Amendment, I trust the Committee will allow me to say a word or two. I want to say, for one, as the Mover of the Amendment, that I entirely and with the fullest heart accept the entirely unnecessary statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I know, as everyone who has studied the history of these Egyptian matters knows, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's firm had something to do with the original loan; and inasmuch as that original loan has yet to have interest paid upon it, and inasmuch as we are now voting money to pay that interest, it is, perhaps, not unnatural that some hon. Members here—[*Cries of "No, no!"*—I will call them uninformed Members, if you like—should think that we are doing something for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Why, Sir, any one who has known the Chancellor of the

Exchequer as I have known him—I mean as a public man; I do not know him privately—knows that whatever may have been his chequered career, his honourable personal character entirely removes him above any imputation of this kind. It is certainly not on any ground of imputation against him that I have moved the Amendment. I have taken this course, because I believe that we have no right to spend the public money of this country in the way that is proposed. We on the Radical Benches are trying to save money. [An hon. MEMBER: £100,000,000!] That was not a Radical Government. You have never had a Radical Government yet. This House will have a Radical Government some day, and when it gets it, it will find that it will not spend money in this fashion. A Radical Government will not have officials who, when we are engaged in a contest with the Tory Party in our endeavour to save money, will get up and endeavour to throw a shield over them. The late Surveyor General of the Ordnance (Mr. Woodall), of course, gets up to defend the present Tory Party, and, no doubt, hon. Gentlemen whom he defends will, in course of time, repeat the compliment. What we have just witnessed is a thing which makes hon. Members below the Gangway on this side of the House almost sick of attempting to apply the principles of economical expenditure in the public affairs of this country. We, good Radicals here—and I have no doubt there are some here—sometimes get up above the Gangway, and immediately the boaconstrictor of officialism swallows them, inch by inch, and they go supple and limp as they go down. I hope it is permitted to me to say just so much and no more in answer to the interposition of the late Surveyor General of the Ordnance. Why did he interfere? We were making a very good fight against hon. Gentlemen opposite, and hoped to get a good Division, when up jumps a Gentleman from the Front Opposition Bench, and endeavours to make things smooth for the Ministry. I hold that to be an entirely unnecessary abuse of his powers of speech. We on this side of the House make no personal objection to any Member sitting on the Front Bench opposite, our objection being confined to the spending of money in Egypt in this way. Every man who believes

in economy, and thinks that we should not spend public money abroad when it is so much needed at home, will, I trust, support me in this Division.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 113; Noes 213: Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 56.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Before you, Sir, put the Main Question to the Committee, I have to move the reduction of the total amount by the sum of £30,000. That sum is the amount of the instalment proposed to be paid for the purchase of the Brennan torpedo, for which the Government have agreed to pay the enormous amount of £110,000. I believe Mr. Brennan, the inventor of this torpedo, is an American citizen, and about seven years ago he came over to this country with his torpedo. Since then he has entered into an arrangement with Her Majesty's Government under which he has been paid a considerable sum of money for perfecting or improving his invention. Everybody knows that there are a vast number of torpedoes which have been patented by different inventors; in fact, there are all sorts of inventions in connection with torpedoes; and when a Company having one of these inventions comes out, the first thing the Company does is to give a large sum in cash for a patent. Generally speaking this patent is worthless, and in the course of a year or two the shareholders lose their money. We are very much in the hands of the shareholders of the Brennan Company in this matter, as we now see we are called upon to pay £110,000 for this invention, which may be superseded by some other before very long. Who, I ask, will guarantee that someone will not next year invent a torpedo infinitely better than the Brennan torpedo? Who would venture to guarantee that this Brennan torpedo will be better than any other torpedo? Well, Sir, I ask Her Majesty's Government to pause and consider what they are about to do. This gentleman, as I have said, is an American citizen—[An hon. MEMBER: No; an Australian.] Very well, he is an Australian citizen; he is a practical Australian. He comes over here to sell the torpedo he has invented, to us. Do we pay him for the exclusive use of

the torpedo? I say no, by no means. Any Government that wishes to do so can get hold of one of these torpedoes, and thus make use of an invention for which we are asked to pay £110,000. Consequently, we are asked to pay that sum for a torpedo which, owing to no fault of the Australian inventor, may become available to other Governments. I have, therefore, to move that the amount of this Vote be reduced by the sum of £30,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £30,000, instalment of £110,000, Payment for the Brennan Torpedo, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(Mr. Labouchere.)

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth): I think, Sir, that this matter ought to have been brought before the House in the usual course in the ordinary Army Estimates for the ensuing year, and that it should not have been sprung upon us, as it has been, in Committee on a Supplementary Estimate, as an instalment of £110,000, which is to be paid for an invention that may be, as my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has stated, capped or improved upon by some other inventor to-morrow. We have already had to pay I do not know how much money for the Whitehead torpedo. Now we have another, which is said to beat the Whitehead invention, and no one can say that we may not have a third put before us to-morrow. I think, therefore, we should be altogether in the wrong in paying so large a sum for such a purpose. Her Majesty's Government are very chary, indeed, in asking for sums of money for our soldiers; but they do not hesitate to throw away £110,000 for an invention which I do not say is useless, but which certainly is an extravagance such as ought not to be encouraged by this House. I should like to know from the hon. Member who is in charge of the Ordnance Department (Mr. H. S. Northcote), how much this invention will cost the country altogether, and how far we are committed as the matter at present stands? I quite agree with what the hon. Member for Northampton has stated upon the subject.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The fact that this Estimate has been presented by the Government towards the middle of the last month of

the financial year, when, to look at it, one might imagine it could easily have been postponed until the regular Estimates for the year ensuing are brought forward, would seem to suggest the idea that in all probability the expenditure under the Estimate has been already incurred, and that the War Department in making it is under some existing liability. I should like to know how far we are already pledged to Mr. Brennan in connection with this torpedo; and, perhaps, in answering this question, the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote), who, I see, is about to rise, will inform the Committee as to the past relations of this gentleman with the Admiralty or the War Office.

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. H. S. Northcote) (Exeter): The Committee, I think, are aware that, generally speaking, this is a torpedo for which very great advantages were claimed by the inventor, and these advantages have been admitted by the professional Committees which have examined specially into his method. One of the principal advantages of this torpedo is that it is controllable from the moment of its being launched until it strikes the object at which it is aimed. Its speed can be accelerated or reduced in one direction or the other at the will of the person controlling its action. The torpedo was first brought over to this country by Mr. Brennan in the year 1881, and the then Secretary of State for War submitted the invention to a Committee of the Royal Engineers. They reported very favourably of the principle of the invention. In the year 1882, Mr. Brennan was asked what was the price of his invention, and he replied £100,000. The Secretary of State for War did not at that time express any opinion, either one way or the other, as to the advisability of guaranteeing that sum; but, the torpedo being then in an imperfect state, he decided that £5,000 should be paid to Mr. Brennan for services rendered; that further trials should be made of the torpedo; and that Mr. Brennan should be engaged for three years, at a salary of £1,000 per year, with expenses paid by Her Majesty's Government, for perfecting the torpedo. That was the arrangement then entered into by the right hon. Gentleman the then Secretary of State for War. In the

year 1883, a formal agreement was drawn up between the War Office and Mr. Brennan, under which Mr. Brennan was at liberty to give two months' notice to the War Office at any time when he might consider the torpedo was in such a perfect state as to warrant a definite decision as to its purchase by Her Majesty's Government—the Government reserving the right of pre-emption; but in that agreement they did not name any specific sum for the purchase of the invention. In October, 1886, Mr. Brennan, according to his agreement, gave the authorities two months' notice that he considered his torpedo had been perfected, and he asked Her Majesty's Government to decide without delay whether they would purchase the invention or not. This, then, is my answer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth (Sir William Crossman), the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor), and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) as to why this item appears in the Supplementary Estimates instead of in the Estimates for the ensuing year. Mr. Brennan having given the notice agreed upon under our arrangement with him, we were compelled to come to a decision. In answer to the observations of the hon. Member for East Donegal, I may say that the torpedo is one which in its present condition is not, I believe, considered by the Admiralty as suitable for use from or on board our ships; and the reason which induced the Secretary of State for War to recommend its purchase is, that it was considered that the torpedo would prove of most valuable and efficient service for coast defence and the defence of our different ports. When the question whether the torpedo should or should not be purchased came before the Committee, over which I myself had the honour to preside, we had to bear in mind that if the Secretary of State for War should decide not to make the purchase, he would throw over the unanimous advice of a Committee of professional advisers; that a sum of about £20,000 had already been expended from the public funds in assisting Mr. Brennan to perfect his invention, and that this amount would be entirely thrown away; and, further, that we should lose the services of Mr. Brennan, who is described

to me, and whom I believe to be, a mechanical engineer of exceptional ability, whose services would be of great use to the country. I had also to consider that if we did not purchase this invention there was the risk of its falling into the hands of some other Government, and of its possible hostile use against ourselves. I would also remind the Committee that by the purchase of this torpedo a real economy will probably be effected, because I hope the invention will to a large extent take the place of guns in the defence of certain portions of our coasts, while it would also diminish our expenditure on submarine mining. I may state, in answer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth, that the installation of a Brennan torpedo apparatus, with 12 torpedoes, would cost about £6,000—while the erection of a 10-inch gun costs the country about £15,000. There is the further advantage in connection with the installation of this torpedo, that while it would thus take the place of a gun, at about one-third of the cost of the latter, it would also present a smaller mark for an enemy's fire. I may add that it is not an electrical torpedo. Of course, the Government was placed in a rather difficult position by the fact that the agreement entered into in 1883, although it reserved the right of pre-emption, did not fix any sum for which the torpedo might be purchased when it had been completed. Mr. Brennan had pointed out that if the imperfect torpedo in 1881 was worth £100,000, the torpedo when more complete and in its perfected form was worth a much larger sum. Besides, Mr. Brennan stated, and in my opinion not without foundation, that if he went into the open market he could get much more for his invention. I must say that if Mr. Brennan did not feel that he had been treated with great fairness and with great courtesy by Her Majesty's Government, he certainly would not have accepted anything like the sum proposed. I am confident that Mr. Brennan might have obtained a much larger sum, and I am bound to say that had he considered the dividends of some Companies he, perhaps, would have refused to sell his invention to the Government of this country except at a price which they could not have afforded to give. The original sum Mr. Brennan asked was £100,000, and now he is only

asking £110,000, the extra £10,000 being in consequence of certain obligations and liabilities he has since incurred. Under these circumstances, negotiations took place between the Government and the inventor, who had withdrawn his suggestion of a larger salary being paid to himself on the representation being made to him that the Government considered they had treated him in an unusual manner of liberality. Mr. Brennan agreed to take a smaller sum than the original claim, and the Government agreed that an annual sum of £16,000 should be paid for five years to the inventor, provided the secret was not divulged through any fault of his. The Government, however, are quite aware that in doing what they had done some risk is incurred, but incurred with the best interests of the country in view. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) is prepared to maintain as a general principle, as I understand the hon. Gentleman to maintain, that objection should be taken to the acquisition of any property, be it torpedo or other, on the ground that there might be a more desirable property forthcoming in a short time. If that principle were adopted we never should acquire any invention, and it would be never safe to acquire anything at all, because we could never be certain that something better may not be offered to us on the morrow. On the whole, I think the House will agree that the Government have made a sensible and reasonable bargain.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think that there is only one important point which has been omitted in the consideration of this matter. It appears to me that we ought to have mentioned to us the names of the leading professional advisers who responsibly guide the Government when such a large sum as this is at stake. On the whole, I am inclined to believe that the arguments of the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote) are very fair, and that they ought to be well weighed before any adverse judgment is made on them. I am not prepared to say, because it is impossible to say, whether the torpedo is worth the money to be paid for it or not. I have not seen it, and I know little beyond what is contained in the description

given by the hon. Gentleman. I believe that it cannot be doubted that the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance having had proper and responsible professional advice, was bound not to allow a valuable invention to be lost to the country. The only point where it appears to me the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General has not touched as he should, is this. He ought to tell the House the names of some of the professional advisers of the Government, because it seems to me that these gentlemen, and not wholly the Government, would be practically responsible for the success of the invention, if it is a success, and for the failure of the invention should it so turn out. I must repeat that I really think the Government has done the best they could under the circumstances, and amidst the difficulties which have been suggested by the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere)—very sensible difficulties I admit. I would appeal to the Government again to give us the names of the professional advisers upon whose recommendation the purchase is being made.

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN: I quite think, Sir, that royalties should be paid for this invention instead of so large a sum down. If the Government would reconsider the matter they might easily come to some arrangement by which this might be done. I must say that after what has occurred at Chatham I have little confidence that the plans and inventions in the possession of this Government can be secured against the other powers. To me it appears that £110,000 is a most extravagant sum for the advantage, and I think that the Government should arrange some means by which a royalty would be paid instead.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I do not apprehend, Sir, that there will be much objection to this Vote on this side of the House, because I understand that Mr. Brennan, though he comes from Australia, is an Irishman. I do not know very much about torpedoes myself, and I believe very few Gentlemen in this House do know anything about them. I always thought, however, torpedoes were used in water, but I gather from the remarks of the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote) that this torpedo which we are asked to purchase is to be used

on land. This torpedo is evidently a sort of mechanical horse-marine which may be very useful in its way. But I should like the Government seriously to consider what they are spending over this invention. This is how the matter appears to me. A gentleman invents a torpedo which, of course, he thinks is perfect. He then comes on an unsophisticated Surveyor of Ordnance and induces the Surveyor to give him £5,000 to improve his invention, and to pay him £1,000 a-year whilst he is working to improve the invention. This being done, and the Surveyor not knowing and not satisfied that there may be a better invention the very next day, further gives the inventing gentleman £110,000. After this very generous arrangement, I think we ought to know something more about the matter. I ask the hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. S. Northcote) how this torpedo works. I do not want him to reveal any important secrets, but we know that what I ask is already an open secret. Now, I venture to assure the hon. Gentleman the Surveyor General of Ordnance that we have got an engineer in Sunderland—a very capable man, who has devoted a great deal of attention to these matters—who has invented a torpedo on the precise principle as the one for which the Government has paid £110,000, which has been in use in Sunderland for a long time. Now, I just remark that when Mr. Brennan and the Government try to prove that they have got an invention secret and important, they will awake to find that there is another invention of a similar machine equally perfect and on precisely the same principle already in existence. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) in his criticisms of this affair. Just let the Government think of the nature of their undertaking. When an invention for the destruction of life is offered to the Government for purchase, they give over £110,000 for it; I should like to know what sum the Government would be prepared to give for any life-saving apparatus? And, remember, it is in the House of Commons which begins every day with prayers, that this enormous sum of money is devoted to destructive purposes. It would seem that where destruction is, there are we generous. I certainly do agree with some hon. Gentlemen who

have spoken, in thinking that a process of paying by royalty is very much the better plan indeed. He who can kill or provide the means to kill the greatest number of his fellow-men may be a heaven-born genius. To me it seems that there can be different opinions about the desirabilities of such skilful inventions, however. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton divides the House on this question, I, for one, will support him; for I think we can surely do better than buy such an invention as this.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): The author of this invention, Mr. Brennan, was born in Australia, and has devoted many years to invention in Australia. The result of his inventions he communicates to the Government in England, and so impresses the Admiralty that they give him every facility for improving the invention. He succeeds in making a torpedo with five times the range of any other torpedo in existence, and three times the power. Foreign Governments were quite willing to give the inventor double the price which this Government offered—and so Mr. Brennan does not care whether you accept his offer or not—but still, simply through his loyalty to this country, which was too strong to allow him to give to any other country than England the invention, he was induced to make the first offer to this Government. In spite of what my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) has said about the invention being anticipated—his statements are what we call in Australia “blowing”—I maintain, and I have authority to say, that the invention is unknown to anyone outside the authorities of the Admiralty. The apparatus was such that it could be guided from the shore to a belligerent vessel several miles distant, and no vessel could withstand the shock. Foreign Governments would give this young Australian double the price we were giving. [*Cheers and a Voice*: “Why does he not sell it to them, then?”] Well, the reason was simple. It was greatly to his credit, that in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, he still remains an Englishman. [*A Voice*: “He is an Irishman.”] Well, he might have been a Russian, a Prussian, or a Scotchman, but he still remains an English-Australian. His father, he believed, was a

clergyman. At any rate, he in the most loyal manner gave his invention to England. As to its value, it was well known that the Whitehead Torpedo Company were making £80,000 a-year, and as this was a greater and more destructive weapon the Government had made a good bargain. Mr. Brennan does not care, as I have said, whether you accept the terms or not; and, at any rate, the price of the whole thing is only about one-third of the price paid for a man-of-war. From my knowledge of the facts of the matter, I am quite confident that we shall be doing wisely in purchasing this torpedo. Besides, apart from all other considerations, a contract has already been made and signed with Mr. Brennan for the purchase of the torpedo, and I certainly think that this settlement is conscientiously binding on the country.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Sir, so far as I am aware from what has been said by the Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. H. S. Northcote), this money is to be paid for the exclusive right of the invention. It certainly does seem to me that we are being asked to sanction an expenditure of a very novel character. We have never before paid for the exclusive right of an invention of this kind, and if we consent to this payment, all I have to say is that we shall have inventors coming from all quarters and submitting their torpedoes on the same terms. I think that the House should not allow this proposal to pass without very serious consideration. We have already heard that the invention cannot be used by ships of war, but can only be used from the shore. My hon. and gallant friend the Member for Portsmouth (Sir William Crossman) has explained to you the value of the invention, and suggested that a royalty should be substituted for the price to be paid, and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) tells you that the invention is already in use in Sunderland. I would ask the Government whether, under the circumstances, it would not be well to have a Select Committee on the subject. I make this suggestion, and I would point out that, if even a public building is proposed to be erected, you have a Select Committee to consider the matter. Considering the extreme novelty of the proposal—you never have bought an

exclusive right of this character before—and the unusual circumstances of the case, I would hope that the Government would adopt my recommendation. I would venture to suggest to them to consider whether, in the meantime, it would not be well for the Government to withdraw this Vote.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I must say that if the proposal is a novel one, so is the weapon. This torpedo is quite unknown in warfare, and it is believed that if it were used it would have the best practical results. I can say this, that any Government which should receive the advice which the present Government received some months ago from a Committee of Professional Advisers who were appointed to consider this matter, would not be doing their duty by the country, or consulting its best interests, if they did not acquire, at what they conceived to be under all the circumstances of the case a reasonable price, the exclusive use of a weapon of this kind. The hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) had asked for the names of the Committee of professional gentlemen who advised the Government in this matter. That Committee consisted of the Inspector General of Fortifications, General Alderson, R.A., Professor Abel, Chemist to the War Department, and Captain Fisher, Director of Naval Ordnance, assisted by representatives from the Treasury. These were the professional men appointed for the purpose of estimating the value of the torpedo, and on their recommendation the Government came to the conclusion that the best interests of the country demanded that we should have the exclusive purchase of this torpedo. Then, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Central Division of Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) had asked if the Government were prepared to send this subject to be dealt with by a Select Committee. The Government is not prepared to do so. This is one of those things which must be proposed to the House on the responsibility of the Government, and the Government were quite prepared to accept the responsibility for their action. For these reasons the Government submitted the proposal, in the full belief that the House would support them in

securing the most efficient means possible of defending the country.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): I think, Mr. Courtney, that we should recognize that, not only is a new principle involved in this proposal, but it is also of the greatest importance to understand why this anxiety exists to get money voted to make payment for a thing the nature of which is not well understood, and the result of which in use is not at all known for certain, is so great. This new expenditure which is proposed would, in my opinion, be the first of a type, and would introduce a totally novel addition to the Estimates of the Public Service of a very extensive and certainly most extraordinary character. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) has given the House the names of the gentlemen upon whose authority this expenditure has been undertaken. Well, Sir, as I look at the matter, it is a remarkable fact that every name, with the single exception of a most distinguished chemist, is—if I heard the names correctly, and I think I did—that of a military or naval officer. Well, I should like to know where are the names of distinguished mechanical men? Why was not one of these appointed?

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: He would tell the secret.

SIR EDWARD REED: I do not know why a mechanical man should tell the secret any more than a military or naval man. A great deal of the money voted by this House is voted by professional advice, which is invaluable; but care is taken that the Committee of advice shall be very complete and competent. The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), who will be moving in a few days the Navy Estimates, has published a statement which embodies an elaborate and clear explanation of the misappropriation of large sums of the public money. [*Interruption.*] Sir, it is the privilege of a Member of this Committee to make a remark by way of illustration, and I hope nothing will ever happen to deprive Members of that privilege. This proposed purchase is a matter which will admit of delay, and this House will, in my humble opinion, be very much wanting in its duty to the public if it should vote

such an immense sum for an invention about which it knows nothing, and which is likely to be succeeded by fifty others in a very short time, setting up like claims upon the public purse.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): It is not denied by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Stanhope) that this is a novel proposal, and I beg to add, having some acquaintance with mechanics and inventions, that the Government will soon find that they may expect to have their hands kept full by the claims of hare-brained inventing individuals. I wish to know whether there is no way in which the Government can escape, and whether the Government is able to see the impropriety of what it has done. It is impossible for the Government to make any arrangement with this gentleman (Mr. Brennan) except subject to the approval of the House, and I would urge that this now is the time when we should fairly and fully consider the merits of the matter. Of all property in the world, property in inventions and patents is the most precarious and the most perishable property. Very frequently it occurs that the man who has largely spent his money in purchasing a patent, has found out soon that that patent has been completely superseded. I would like to ask whether the Government have so far committed themselves that it is not open to the Members of the House of Commons to consider the propriety of adopting this proposal? What security had they that this invention was not superseded? What security had the country that the invention was going to be kept a secret? I do not believe that the Government could give this Committee a guarantee that the secret would be kept for three months. There are many men in the service of the State who, for money, are willing to divulge the secrets of their Departments of the Government, and this invention is just one of those secrets where the men can be tempted to divulge the knowledge that they possess. I do not think that it is possible to manufacture these torpedoes and keep the matter secret amongst the workmen. There is a very novel principle being introduced in connection with this affair, and if the invention is worth £110,000, I do not hesitate to say that we may have a million charged before long to

the taxpayers. The Military and Naval expenditure of this country is ever on the increase, and my opinion in regard to this portion of it is that this torpedo, which we propose to purchase at an enormous cost, will soon be superseded by another invention. I do not at all wish to condemn the invention, but I do wish to enforce the fact that the House is not clearly in a position to know its value, for the recommending authorities, not being mechanical experts, have not sufficient knowledge to declare the value of the invention. The proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) that a Select Committee should examine the matter, does not design to throw overboard all acceptance of the torpedo, and I hope this Committee may be divided on pressing this suggestion on the Government in order that we may not rush blindfold on the proposal, and open the door to all manner of extravagance and folly in regard to such inventions in the future. I believe that the Government should be specially careful in entering upon a large matter of this kind, and, for that reason, I would impress on them the need of the whole thing coming before a Select Committee upstairs. I venture to think that we should be held to blame and responsibility if we committed the House and the country to this expenditure upon such a very short and inadequate discussion. I may say that, personally, I am in favour of a royalty being paid; but just at present it is my intention, should my right hon. Friend the Member for Central Bradford press to a Division on this point on the principle of safeguarding the public money, to vote with him in order to protest against the rash conduct of the Government in laying this enormous charge on the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I hope the House will accept this Vote, and I can assure the House that it was only after very grave consideration, and with a full sense of their responsibility, that the Government placed this Vote in the Estimates. This torpedo is not a new affair at all. It has been under trial for many years. The value of it has been testified to by every engineer officer who had been present at the experiments, and there is no doubt whatever in the minds of all

who at that testing had any acquaintance with the torpedo, that if the Government had not acquired it, the secret would have been made a very profitable one for general use. Well, Sir, we were satisfied and convinced that it would be against the best interests of this country that that secret should come into general use, and even if we preserved it to ourselves for the five years during which the money would have to be paid, we shall secure a very great advantage to this country. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth (Sir William Crossman) suggests that we should pay a royalty to the inventor instead of the arrangement proposed. I am altogether opposed to the royalty principle, and I believe it would be of no advantage to us, for if we made such an agreement it would be impossible for us to prevent the weapon being offered to other countries, and the Government regarding the interests of this country, was not prepared to incur that responsibility. Besides, no person of experience in this matter has any doubt whatever about the necessity for our action, and the Government would be very reluctant indeed to withdraw their proposal. I am satisfied that it will be a good thing for this country, because I think we shall get a perfect defence for our coast at a comparatively small cost. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Central Division of Bradford suggests a Select Committee, but I am afraid that the House must either accept this Vote or reject it. If they reject the Vote it passes out of our hands. That is the conclusion at which we have arrived; and if it does pass out of our hands I believe that the country will sustain a very great loss, and also be exposed to a very great risk.

MR. DODDS (Stockton): Mr. Speaker, I will not detain the House for more than a moment or two, but there are circumstances connected with this matter to which I should like to refer. I agree with many of my hon. Friends on this side of the House that it would be preferable to pay by royalty rather than in a lump sum, providing a scheme of that kind could have been arranged. But we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) as well as from hon. Gentlemen opposite that such a scheme was suggested, but it was found that

it could not possibly be carried into effect, and that being so, I for one am prepared, with a perfectly light heart, to vote the sum which is demanded. I should like, however, to say why I do so. My right hon. Friend the Member for Central Bradford has referred to the feeling in the country in regard to matters of this kind. Well, I am going to express the feeling which prevails in my part of the country in regard to our coast defences, and to the value of torpedoes in our estuary. I represent a town 10 or 12 miles from the sea, and it is not too much to say that our case is analogous with that of many other towns. For instance, at Middlesbrough, and also at Stockton, there has been a great expenditure of money on iron-works and works of every description, but at this moment they, as well as the towns themselves, are at the mercy of any enemy's ship, which, if it should run up the Tees, could destroy property to the value of millions. The War Office have already made preparation for a torpedo station near the South Pier within the estuary of the Tees, and I am of opinion that it will be of enormous service to the towns on that river. The towns there are entirely unprotected, and what is largely required is a torpedo such as this is described to be, and such as I hope it may prove to be. It will be of enormous value for our unprotected coasts, and I believe that no quantity of guns are so likely to prove effective in the work of coast protection as a torpedo of this kind. I trust that that circumstance will be taken into consideration by this House, and I am sure that it will be by those who are interested in the towns on the River Tees, on the banks of the Humber, and on other unprotected rivers and estuaries. If the torpedo in any way approaches the expectations indulged in in regard to it, it will be well worth the money asked for it. I heartily support the Vote.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put one Question to my hon. Friend the Surveyor General of Ordnance, and that is, whether Mr. Young Terry, of whose dismissal from Chatham Dockyard we have heard this evening, has had any of the drawings of this torpedo in his hand?

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Mr. Speaker, I am bound to say that, I

my opinion, the Government have done perfectly right in purchasing this torpedo; for even if the torpedo is nothing more than it is represented to be, the price seems to be a very small one. On several occasions in this House I have taken an opportunity in the discussions on the Estimates to complain of the Government for having refused to purchase valuable information and inventions offered them, and allowed them to be sold to other countries. I should, therefore, if I opposed this Vote, be acting in opposition to the principle I have always advocated. Some years ago, an invention was offered to our Government which might be utilized for fast cruisers, and although a favourable report was made on it, after experiments had been made, the English Government of the day refused to spend any money in furtherance of it. The invention was shortly afterwards adopted by the German Government. I admit that at the time it was offered to our Government it was not in a very practical or complete form; but still there was sufficient to show the value of the invention. The German Government, as I said before, took it up, found the little money the inventor required, and enabled him to complete it, and have now adopted it throughout their entire Service. I cannot approve the proposal to submit this matter to a Committee. How is a Committee to judge in a matter like this? If I were on such a Committee I could form no opinion unless I had the whole thing explained to me. If it were so explained, there would be this danger—that, in the course of casual conversation, an hon. Member, in perfect unconsciousness, might allow the secret to escape. But my strong point is that no Committee could form an opinion on the value of the invention and the desirability of acquiring it without having the whole matter before them, and that, it seems to me, would defeat the whole object of purchasing the invention. I, therefore, for these reasons, heartily support the Vote, being fully prepared to accept the opinion of the scientific advisers of the Government who have had the matter in hand. The responsibility is on their shoulders. Hon. Gentlemen like myself would not, I should think, deem themselves capable to judge in this matter. In questions of this

kind the whole responsibility must rest upon the shoulders of those who are the responsible advisers of the Government. They have declared that this invention will prove of considerable value to this country; and, that being so, I think the Government would act very wrongly indeed if they refused to acquire it on reasonable terms.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Mr. Speaker, I have only one observation to make, and that is on a point which seems to have escaped the attention of the Committee. I understood an hon. Gentleman opposite to say that this invention was no secret, as there are two Governments who, knowing of it, are ready to buy it at a much higher price.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: No, Sir; nothing of the kind. I said that while the invention was a secret, the knowledge of the power it possesses and the work it can do is no secret.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I understood the hon. Member to say that two Governments were prepared to pay double the price for it which our Government is now about to give. If I were mistaken, I have nothing to add; but if the statement be true—and if it were not, I presume the hon. Member would not have committed himself to it, nor would he have made it, unless he had had some communication with the person who is offering to sell the invention—then I am bound to assume that no Government would be so foolish as to bid £220,000 for something of which they knew nothing at all. If the statement be true—and I assume that it is—then the Government have within this House, and on their own side, evidence that this secret has already been disclosed.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I rise, not for the purpose of going against this Vote, or, indeed, with the object of advocating the purchase of this torpedo. But I have an altogether different intention in rising to take part in this debate. In the first place, I certainly wish to congratulate the Surveyor General of Ordnance, who, in a thoroughly nice and courteous way, gave this Committee all the information in his power. I should recommend him as an example to right hon. Gentlemen on that Bench; and I can assure them that such courtesy, and such a readiness to give explanations, will always meet with a certain amount of reciprocity on these

Benches; and, while congratulating the Surveyor General of Ordnance, I should also like to do, if possible, a good turn for the unfortunate patentee, who, we are told, could get so much more for his invention if he took it elsewhere. If he can do that, I really do not see why we should interfere with him. If I were a friend of the patentee—and I am told he is an Irishman—I do not, of course, endorse a thing simply because it is done by an Irishman; and, for instance, I could not endorse all the actions of my hon. Friend the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh —

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: I merely mention that, Sir, as an explanation. Now, Sir, a highly dangerous remark escaped from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, who said he sincerely hoped it would soon be in general use, like, as the advertisements say, Mrs. Winslow's Syrup, which should be used in every family. I think that such a statement was ill-advised; and I sincerely hope that if the Government is going to purchase this torpedo, it will not become an article of ordinary and general use. I hope, too, the knowledge will not be imparted to other nations. I have fulfilled the objects I had in rising—first, to compliment the Surveyor General of Ordnance; next, to do a good turn for the patentee; and, finally, to warn the First Lord of the Treasury against the use of indiscriminate language.

MR. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness): The Committee have to consider whether or not this torpedo is worth the money which is proposed to pay for it. It has been suggested that the question should be referred to a Committee of this House. But the right Committee to report upon such an apparatus as this is a Committee of Experts. They have reported on it; and, in spite of what has been said by the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed), who knows perfectly well that no better Committee could have been found in this country to report on such a torpedo as this, I must say that the Admiralty seem to me to have obtained the very best advice they could before entering into the agreement. I shall have no hesitation in accepting the advice given by this Committee of Experts.

Dr. Tanner

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 77; Noes 192: Majority 115.—(Div. List, No. 57.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow*.

Committee to sit again *To-morrow*.

METROPOLITAN OPEN SPACES ACT (1881) EXTENSION BILL.

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Dabrymple, Sir Charles Forster, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Reid, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Salt.*)

[BILL 171.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which has for its object the extension to other parts of the country of the provisions of the Metropolitan Open Spaces Act. In many places throughout the country there are open spaces arising from burying grounds disused, which have fallen into anything but a creditable condition, and which it would be well for the neighbourhood to have kept in proper order, for the recreation of inhabitants of the town. But it has been decided, legally, that the expense of keeping such space in order must fall upon the rates of the particular parish in which the ground is situated, although there may be more than one parish interested. In Walsall, for example, there is such a disused burial ground, and it is felt that it would be an advantage to the town if such were kept in order; the Corporation are willing to undertake the duty of keeping it so, if they had authority for so doing, which, at present, they have not. Under the present state of the law it rests with the parish. The same difficulty was continually felt in the Metropolis, before it was put an end to by the Act of 1881. Experience of that Act is most satisfactory: it has been attended with much public advantage; and, especially under the auspices of the Public Gardens Association, many disused burying grounds have been put into order, and serve as pleasant gardens. In many towns the need of such an Act is much felt, whereby, at a small outlay, the Municipal Authorities may keep in neatness and order burying

grounds that have fallen into a state of neglect. I hope the House will agree to the second reading of this Bill, which will enable disused burial grounds to be kept in proper order at very slight expense, and to the general advantage of the ratepayers. I now beg to move the second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I may explain that I had blocked this Bill earlier, and I did so in consequence of finding a similar Bill for Ireland had been blocked by Members from both sides of the House. It was, therefore, not for the purpose of interposing with any factious opposition to the principle of the Bill that I did so. The principle of the Bill I believe to be a thoroughly good one, and one that I should wish to promote by every means in my power. I make this personal explanation to show that my action was solely in consequence of the treatment of the Irish Bill.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I am glad my hon. Friend has withdrawn his block against this Bill; we must now do our best, when the Bill reaches its Committee stage, to endeavour to apply to Ireland the principle

which, with all their Unionist proclivities, Tory Members would deny us.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed for Monday next.*

MOTIONS.

—o—

LONDON CORPORATION (CHARGES OF MALVERSATION).

Ordered, That the Select Committee do consist of Five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That Two Members of the House, to be named by the Committee of Selection, be appointed to propose and examine witnesses, but without the power of voting.—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

CRIMINAL LAW (COSTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Milvain, Bill to amend the Law relating to Costs in Criminal Cases, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Milvain, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Lockwood, and Mr. Molloy.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 191.]

VAGRANT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. Dyke Acland, Bill to amend the Vagrant Act, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. C. Dyke Acland, Mr. Caine, Mr. Harry Davenport, Sir Robert Fowler, Sir John Kennerly, and Mr. Henry Wilson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 192.]

House adjourned at twenty-five Minutes before Two o'clock.

[INDEX.]

INDEX

TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, VOLUME CCCXI.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.

EXPLANATION OF THE ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills, Read 1^o, 2^o, 3^o, or 1^a, 2^a, 3^a, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negated.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—*R. P.*, Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*L.*, Lords.—*C.*, Commons.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

Some subjects of debate have been classified under the following "General Headings:"—
ARMY—NAVY—INDIA—IRELAND—SCOTLAND—PARLIAMENT—POOR LAW—POST OFFICE—
METROPOLIS—CHURCH OF ENGLAND—EDUCATION—CRIMINAL LAW—LAW AND JUSTICE—
TAXATION, under WAYS AND MEANS.

A BRAHAM, Mr. W., *Glamorgan, Rhondda*
Mines Regulation—Accident at the Rhondda Colliery, 477

ABRAHAM, Mr. W., *Limerick, W.*
Ireland—Fishery Weirs—State Weirs on the Lower Shannon, 699
Labourers' Acts—Labourers' Cottages, Co. Limerick, 1577

ACLAND, Mr. C. T. D., *Cornwall, Launceston*
Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Volunteer Artillery—Supply of Field Guns, 1072

ADDISON, Mr. J. E. W., *Ashton-under-Lyne*

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to Committee, 450

First Offenders, 2R. 115

Law of Evidence—Evidence of Accused Persons, 709

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Education, Ireland, 1450

ADMIRALTY—First Lord (*see* HAMILTON, Right Hon. Lord G. F.)

ADMIRALTY—Secretary to (*see* FORWOOD, Mr. A. B.)

ADMIRALTY—A Lord of (*see* ASHMEAD-BARTLETT, Mr. E.)

ADMIRALTY—A Lord of (*see* BERESFORD, Lord C. W. de la P.)

Adulteration Acts—Licensed Victuallers in Westminster

Question, Mr. J. G. Talbot; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 8, 1874

ADVOCATE, The LORD (*see* MACDONALD, Right Hon. J. H. A.)

Africa (East Coast)

Portugal—The Zanzibar Coast, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb* 28, 715

Rumoured Annexation of Territory by England, Question, Mr. Richard; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 10, 1721

Slave Traffic, Suppression of the, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb* 18, 43; Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 1, 880

Africa (South)

Progress of Affairs—Lord Salisbury's Letter in "The Times," Questions, Mr. O. V. Morgan, Sir Robert Fowler; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Feb* 25, 583

Zululand, Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Feb* 24, 457

Africa (West Coast)

Mr. H. H. Johnston, Her Majesty's Vice Consul, Question, Mr. A. E. Pease; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 10, 1742

The Gold Coast—Contemplated Acquisition of Territory by England, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Mar* 3, 1081

Agriculture and Depression of Trade

Royal Commission on — The Report — Cheap Edition, Question, Sir John R. Mowbray; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Feb* 18, 44

Legislation, Question, Mr. Heneage; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb* 22, 304

Alien Acts—Immigration of Destitute Aliens

Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 10, 1724

Allotments

Agricultural Statistics—Unoccupied Farms, Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) *Feb* 18, 24

Allotments for Small Householders—Legislation, Question, Mr. Cobb; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board, (Mr. Ritchie) *Feb* 24, 469

Agricultural Labourers, Question, Mr. Walsh; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb* 28, 722

Ambleside Railway Bill

c. Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Ambleside Railway Bill, to inquire and report whether the proposed Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public, who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise; and that they have power to receive Evidence upon the subject" (Mr. Bryce) *Feb* 21, 145

Amendt. to leave out from "whether" insert "the scenery in the neighbourhood will be injuriously affected or otherwise, and that the Committee have power to receive local Evidence upon the subject" (Mr. *Labour-chere*); Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (Mr. *W. H. James*); after further short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed *Feb* 24, 440; after debate, Question put; A. 225, N. 118; M. 107 (D. L. 20)

Main Question put; A. 231, N. 133; M. 98 (D. L. 21)

AMBROSE, Mr. W., *Middlesex, Harrow*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 426

ANDERSON, Mr. C. H., *Elgin and Nairn*

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2), 2R. 1020

Egypt—Proposal of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, 166

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1548

Parliament—Business of the House—Order of Supply, 1361

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 990

Secretary for Scotland, 1749

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 763

Local Government Board, &c. 814

Post Office, 1538

ANSTRUTHER, Colonel R. H. L., *Suffolk, Woodbridge*

Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies, 2R. 440

Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.]

(The Lord Chancellor)

I. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a"
Feb 18, 8 (No. 25)

Amendt. to leave out ("now," add ("this day six months") (The Lord Denman); on Question that ("now," &c., resolved in the affirmative; Bill read 2^a

ARMY (Questions)

Army and Navy—"Contracts and Supplies," Question, Mr. J. Rowlands; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 24, 475

Commanding Officers, Retirement of, Question, General Fraser; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 10, 1723

Staff Paymasters, Promotion of, Question, Colonel Duncan; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 10, 1731

Commissions, Examinations for—The English Language, Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 21, 156

Standard of Visual Acuteness, Question, Sir Guyer Hunter; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 10, 1736

Knightsbridge and Dublin Barracks, Insanitary Condition of, Question, Observations, The Marquess of Ormonde, Lord Ellenborough; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) Feb 25, 559

Medical Officers—Status, Question, Major Rasch; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 28, 690; Question, Sir Guyer Hunter; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 3, 1084

Purchase of Horses for Military Service in Canada and by Foreign Governments, Question, General Sir William Crossman; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 21, 164; Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 28, 704

Royal Horse Artillery, The—Rumoured Reduction of the Force, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 25, 578; Question, General Fraser; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 28, 694

Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and Royal Military Academy, Woolwich—Report of the Board of Visitors, Question, Observations, The Earl of Strafford; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) Feb 28, 668

Singapore, Fortification of—Armament, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 1, 882

The Imperial Institute, Subscription to—Supposed Circular of the Commander-in-Chief, Questions, Mr. P. Stanhope, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope)

ARMY—cont.

Feb 22, 297; — *The Raglan Barracks,* Questions, Mr. Conynbare; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 28, 708

Warlike Stores, Royal Commission on—The Report, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 25, 566

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT

Inspector of Saddlery at Woolwich, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Mar 7, 1399

Superintendent of the Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 10, 1743

Cartridges

Boxer Martini-Henry Cartridges at Woolwich, Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Feb 21, 159, 160; Feb 24, 482; Feb 28, 704

Solid-Drawn Cartridge Cases, Question, Mr. Caldwell; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 24, 468; Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Mar 3, 1071

Contract for Cartridges for Queensland—Messrs. Latimer Clark and Co., Questions, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. De Lisle; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Mar 8, 1582

Defective Weapons

Cullasses and Sword Bayonets, Explanation (Debate Feb 7), The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) Feb 22, 279; Question, Major Rasch; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), 299; Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Feb 24, 479

Guns

Bursting of Rifled Guns—The Return, Question, Sir John Dorington; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 10, 1725

Deficiencies in Naval Guns and Ammunition, Question, Sir William Plowden; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote), Mar 1, 882

MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT

Manufacture of Machine Guns at Enfield, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) Feb 25, 577

Manufacture of Steel at Woolwich, Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Feb 21, 177; Feb 28, 708

Steel for Projectiles at the Royal Laboratory, Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 8, 1583

AUXILIARY FORCES

The Militia (Ireland)—Supply of *Martini-Henry Rifles*, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 3, 1072*
Donegal and Tyrone Militia, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick) *Mar 7, 1398*

The Volunteers

Extra Pay to Permanent Staff, Question, Colonel Eyre; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Feb 18, 39*
The Capitation Grant—Recommendations of the Recent Committee, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 3, 1061*
Marching Allowances to Volunteers, Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Feb 18, 28*
Medals for Volunteer Non-Commissioned Officers, Question, Baron Dimsdale; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 4, 1257*
Volunteer Artillery—Supply of Guns, Question, Mr. C. T. D. Acland; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 3, 1072*

ARMY (INDIA)

Madras—Army Clothing Contracts, Question, Mr. Hoyle; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 10, 1738*
Medical Staff—Brigade Surgeon William Graves, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 10, 1725*

Army—Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defective Weapons and Stores

Moved, That there be laid before this House, "Return of the schedule of complaints and defects printed by the War Office for the use of the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores now sitting, as to the weapons and stores supplied for the use of Her Majesty's Navy" (*The Earl of Harrowby*) *Feb 18, 1*; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

[See title *Army*]

ASHBOURNE, Lord (Lord Chancellor of Ireland)
 Ireland—Jury Laws, 1242

ASHMEAD-BARTLETT, Mr. E. (A Lord of the Admiralty), *Sheffield, Ecclesall*
 Admiralty—Admiralty Regulations—Support and Education of Catholic Orphans, 450
 Greenwich Hospital Fund—Investments, 1088
 "Greenwich Sixpences' Fund," 41

ATKINSON, Mr. H. J., *Boston*
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1480, 1481

ATTORNEY GENERAL (*see* WEBSTER, Sir R. E.)

ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (*see* HOLMES, Right Hon. H.)

BAGGALLAY, Mr. E., *Lambeth, Brixton*
 Burial Acts—Brompton Cemetery, 705, 706
 Parks (Metropolis)—Battersea Park, 700

BALFOUR, Right Hon. A. J. (Secretary for Scotland), *Manchester, E.*

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882
 —Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 274

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, Motion for an Address, 852

Gold and Silver Currency (Royal Commission)
 —The First Report, 460

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 939

Post Office—Mail Service to the Island of Harris, 704

Scotland—Crofters' Holdings Act, 1866—Recovery of Arrears of Rent, 171

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 815, 819

BALFOUR, Right Hon. J. B., *Clackmannan, &c.*

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882
 —Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 275

BALFOUR, General Sir G., *Kincardineshire*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 745

BALFOUR, Mr. G. W., *Leeds, Central*
 Asia, Central—Trade Communication between Tibet and India, 1404

BANES, Major G. E., *West Ham, S.*
 Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 145

BARCLAY, Mr. J. W., *Forfarshire*
 Agricultural Statistics—Unoccupied Farms, 24

BARRAN, Mr. J., *York, W.R., Otley*
 Vaccination Acts—Keighley, &c. 693

BARRY, Mr. J., *Wexford, S.*
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c., Amendt., 814, 818
 Post Office, 1535, 1538, 1542
 Post Office Telegraphs, 1543

BARTLEY, Mr. G. C. T., *Islington, N.*
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1420, 1430, 1437

BAUMANN, Mr. A. A., *Camberwell, Peckham*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1604, 1605

BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. HICKS—
(Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), *Bristol, W.*

Corrupt Practices at Elections—J. M. Williamson, 466

Ireland—Questions

Arms Act—Proclamation of the Coolgreany Meeting, 305

Cashel Town Commissioners—Audit of Accounts, 157

Distress, &c.—Distress in Kerry, 174

Ejectments—Knockmoyleen, Ballycroy, Co. Mayo, 575

Gun Licences—Case of James Maye, Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary, 1073

Inflammatory Language—Speech of Lord Rossmore at the Camla Orange Hall, Monaghan, 1063

Jurors' Acts—Connaught Winter Assizes—The Clerk of the Crown, 165

Labourers Acts, 1883 & 1885—Ennis Poor Law Union—Scheme under the Acts, 17

Law and Police—Durrus Petty Sessions—Hegarty, 154 ;—Extra Police, Co. Cork, 163

Letter of the Archbishop of Cashel, 695

Local Government Board—The Bankers' Account of the Macroom Board of Guardians, 720, 1077

Lunatic Asylums—Criminal Lunatic Asylum—Occupation by the Police, 168 ;—Monaghan Asylum, 154

Mining Industries, 31

Mortgages and Charges on Landed Property, 1086

Parliamentary Franchise—Revision of the Parliamentary Voters' List, 30 ;—Borough of Belfast, 295

Poor Law—Bailieborough Board of Guardians, 161

Prisons—"Intern Officers," 891 ;—Richmond Prison, 176

Privy Council—Dates of Meeting, August, 1886, to January, 1887, 42

Public Meetings, 884, 885

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Questions

"Boycotting" Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Castlewellan, Co. Down, 873

Dynamite Outrage at Residence of Mr. T. Rice Henn, 874

Murder at Ballycar, Co. Clare, 292

Murder of Murphy near Killarney, 302

Outrages—Co. Clare, 474

Riots at Belfast—Compensation to the Local Police, 462 ;—Report of Mr. Wallace MacHardy, 172

Samuel Downing, Co. Kerry, 715

Ireland—Evictions—Questions

Banbridge Board of Guardians, 720

Brooke Estate, Coolgreany, 1080

Eviction of Mrs. Conlon, Co. Roscommon, 155, 166

Evictions in Leitrim, 712, 713

BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks—*cont.*

James Clery, Case of—Ardmoyle, Cashel—

Conduct of an Emergency Man, 1074

The Return, 32

Thomas Walshe, Ballydaffe, Co. Mayo, 567

Westport Union, Co. Mayo, 168

Ireland—Fisheries—Questions

Collection of Statistics, 565

Fishery Weirs—State Weirs on the Lower Shannon, 699

Inland Fisheries—The River Avoch, 18

Salmon Fisheries—Conservators of the Lough Neagh District, 16 ;—River

Shannon—Fines on a Conservator, 164

Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Questions

Endowed Schools Commissioners, 166

Fair Rents—County Westmeath, 158, 159

Lord Annesley's Estate at Belfast, 26, 27

Purchasers of Glebe Land, 706, 889

Sale of Lands in County Donegal, 471

Sittings at Sligo, 173

Sittings in Clare Co. 467

Ireland—Law and Justice—Questions

Criminal Quarter Sessions, Baltinglass, 878

Jury System—"Queen v. Dillon and others," 302, 484 ;—Shorthand Report, 877

Mr. F. Morrice—Co. Clare Grand Jury, 294

Mr. John Redington, Sub-Sheriff of Co. Galway, 1060

Ireland—Magistracy—Questions

Appointment of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 180, 482

Duleek Petty Sessions, 159

Listowel, Co. Kerry, 575

Lurgan Board of Guardians—Hugh Donnelly, of Derrytrasna, Co. Armagh, 564

Mr. H. H. Whitney, Kinsale Union, Kerry, 565

Speech of Major George Johnston, J.P., at Glenties, Co. Donegal, 702

Ireland—National Education—Questions

Commissioners of—Classification of School-keeping by Teachers, 1065

Mrs. Harriet Sonter, a Teacher in Belfast, 24

Teachers and the Orange Society, 23, 1069

Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Questions

Allowances for Horses, 28

County Inspector Brownrigg, 880

Evictions at Ventry, 176

Notices issued by the Deputy Sheriff, Co. Waterford, 1082

Ireland—State of Ireland—Questions

Extra Police in Cork Co. 465

Proclamation of Meeting in Wicklow and Wexford, 473

Procession of Orange Bands, Ballymoney, 31

Prohibition of Meeting at Coolgreany, 716, 717

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 371, 508, 920

BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks.—*cont.*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1102,
1104, 1107, 1109, 1110, 1181, 1182,
1183, 1184, 1201, 1211

Local Government Board, &c. 807, 808,
817

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm.
114; Motion for Adjournment, 845, 851,
852

BEADEL, Mr. W. J., *Essex, Chelmsford*
Contagious Diseases (Cattle) Acts—Outbreak
of Anthrax in Essex, 566

BEAUCHAMP, Earl (Paymaster General)
Church Patronage, Personal Explanation,
1227

BECKETT, Mr. E. W., *York, N.R.,*
Whitby
Royal Commission on Trawling, 1885, 1263

BENTINCK, Right Hon. G. A. C., *White-*
haven
Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Com-
mittee, 153, 441, 442
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Admiralty and War Office, The New, 740

BENTINCK, Mr. W. G. C., *Penryn and*
Falmouth
Education Department—Payment by Results—
Examinations, 1400

BERESFORD, Lord C. W. De La P. (A
Lord of the Admiralty), *Maryle-*
bone, E.
Admiralty—"H.M.S. Falcon"—Prize Money,
460

BETHELL, Commander G. R., *York, E.R.,*
Holderness
Admiralty—"H.M.S. Falcon"—Prize Money,
460
Inland Revenue—Collection of Income Tax,
461
Islands of the Pacific—The New Hebrides—
Fortifications of the French, 299

BIGGAR, Mr. J. G., *Cavan, W.*
Ireland—Questions
Irish Land Commission—Endowed Schools
Commissioners, 165, 166
Poor Law—Bailieborough Board of Guar-
dians, 160
Poor Law Elections—Returning Officers,
Corkhill Union, 1381
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 1703
Scotland—Criminal Law—Private Prosecu-
tions, 692
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Science and Art Department, &c. 838, 841
Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation,
2R. 1058

BIGWOOD, Mr. J., *Middlesex, Brentford*
Inland Revenue—Assessments in Ealing and
Brentford, 463

Bills of Exchange (Summary Judgment)
Bill (*Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Sir*
Albert Rollit, Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Essle-
mont)

c. Ordered; read 1° * Mar 2 [Bill 185]

BIRKBECK, Sir E., *Norfolk, E.*
Inland Revenue—Experiment in Tobacco Cul-
tivation, 481
North Sea Liquor Traffic—The International
Conference, 1726

BLAKE, Mr. J. A., *Carlrow*
Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1562
Ireland—Fisheries—Collection of Statistics,
565

BLAKE, Mr. T., *Gloucester, Forest of Dean*
Magistracy (England and Wales)—Coleford—
Sentence on an Old Man, 37
Post Office—Head Postmasters, 871

BLANE, Mr. A., *Armagh, S.*
Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Ser-
vices, 1844, 1845
Ireland—Questions
Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—
Action of the Police, 1386, 1387
Law and Justice—Jury System—Challenges
in Criminal Cases—"Queen v. Gartland
and McKenna," 1394
Magistracy—Lurgan Board of Guardians—
Hugh Donnelly, of Derrytrasna, Co.
Armagh, 564
Salmon Fisheries—Conservators of the
Lough Neagh District, 15
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 1011
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1117,
1119
Public Buildings, Great Britain, 738

BOARD OF TRADE—President (*see* STAN-
LEY OF PRESTON, Lord)

BOARD OF TRADE—Secretary to (*see*
DE WORMS, Baron H.)

"Board of Trade Journal"—*Advertising*
Agents
Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers,
The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron
Henry De Worms) Feb 25, 580

BOARD OF WORKS—Chairman (*see*
M'GAREL-HOGG, Sir J. M.)

Borneo—The Limbang River

Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 28, 699*

BORTHWICK, Sir A., Kensington, S.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1660

Parliament—House of Commons—Fogs, 1397
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 760

BRADLAUGH, Mr. C., Northampton

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1777, 1779, 1780, 1783, 1785, 1786, 1787, 1866

First Offenders, 2R. 115

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 142

Law and Justice—Prison Service (England), 161

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 904, 909, 1089;
Motion for a Select Committee, 1226, 1665

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 520, 550, 594, 595, 949, 1694

Poor Law—Case of James Westbury, an Agricultural Labourer, 574

Post Office—Central Telegraph Office—Promotion, 694

Telegraph Inspectorship at Liverpool, 1733

Supply—Supplementary Estimates—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 772

Civil Service Commission, 798, 799

Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1216, 1217

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 834

Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 760, 762

Embassies and Missions Abroad, Amendt. 1461, 1465, 1481, 1484, 1496, 1498

Marlborough House, 725

Science and Art Department, 1220

Vaccination—Cumulative Penalties—Case of Charles Hayward, 1265

BRABOURNE, Lord

Magistracy (Ireland)—Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 132, 1024

Malta, Motion for Papers, 1231

BRAMWELL, Lord

Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 866

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R. 859

Ireland—Jury Laws, 1241

Justices' Jurisdiction, 2R. 434

Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 430;
Comm. cl. 2, 1025; cl. 5, 1025

BRIGHT, Mr. J., Manchester, S. W.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 516

British Honduras

Question, Mr. Marjoribanks; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Feb 23, 718*

BROADHURST, Mr. H., Nottingham, W.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 353

Trade and Commerce—Manufacture and False Marking of Goods at Sheffield, 44

BRODRICK, Hon. W. St. J. F. (Financial Secretary, War Department), Surrey, Guildford

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Donegal and Tyrone Militia, 1398

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1779, 1780, 1785, 1820, 1821

Law and Justice (Scotland)—The Canteen Committee of Fort George, Inverness, 476

BROWN, Mr. A. L., Hawick, &c.

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882—Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 271

Ireland—Fisheries—Crown Salmon Fisheries, 174

BRUCE, Lord H., Wilts, Chippenham

Metropolitan Board of Works—Condemned Buildings in Whitechapel, 1590

BRYCE, Mr. J., Aberdeen, S.

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 147

China and Burmah—The Delimitation Commission, 1886, 35

Egypt—Enforcement of the Corvée, 300

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 380

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 72

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1492

BUCHANAN, Mr. T. R., Edinburgh, W.

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882—Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 276

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 399

BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS, Duke of (Chairman of Committees)

Potter's Patent, 2R. 559

Bulgaria

Affairs of—*The Debate on the Address (Friday, February 18)*, Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 21, 181*

Mr. Condie Stephen, Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 24, 479*

Bulgaria—cont.

The Recent Outbreak—Use of Torture on the captured Insurgents, Question, Lord Elcho ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 10, 1872*

BURDETT-COUTTS, Mr. W. L. A. B.,
Westminster

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 143

Burials Acts

Attleborough New Cemetery, Question, Mr. Cozens-Hardy ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18, 40*

Brompton Cemetery, Questions, Mr. Bag-gallay ; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Feb 28, 705*

Stratford Cemetery, Disturbance at—Funeral of Simon Tweed, Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Lionel Cohen ; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 1, 891*

Removal of the Dead from Churchyards and Burial Grounds, Questions, Mr. Pitt-Lewis, Mr. Conybeare ; Answers, the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18, 19*

Burmah (Upper)

Alleged Barbarities—The Military Expedition, Questions, Dr. Cameron ; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 1, 888 ; Mar 7, 1406*

China and Burmah—The Delimitation Commission, 1886, Question, Mr. Bryce ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 18, 35*

BUXTON, Mr. S. C., *Tower Hamlets,*
Poplar

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), 305

BYRNE, Mr. G. M., *Wicklow, W.*

Ireland—Law and Justice—Criminal Quarter Sessions, Baltinglass, 877

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 746

CADOGAN, Earl (Lord Privy Seal)

Crime and Outrage (Ireland)—Riots at Belfast —Report of the Commissioners, 1862

CAINE, Mr. W. S., *Barrow-in-Furness*

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1867

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 914

CALDWELL, Mr. J., *Glasgow, St. Rollox*

Army (Ammunition)—Solid-drawn Cartridges, 468

Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1559

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 814

CAMBRIDGE, Duke of (Field Marshal
Commanding in Chief)

Horse Breeding and Supply for Military and Industrial Purposes, 1376

CAMERON, Dr. C., *Glasgow, College*

Admiralty—Naval Operations in New Guinea, 34

Africa (East)—Portugal—Zanzibar Coast, 715
Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1824, 1825

Burmah (Upper)—Military Expedition—Alleged Cruelties, 888, 1406

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882 —Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 273

Expenditure of Lighthouse Boards, 469, 470
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1544, 1546

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 201

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 63

Post Office Savings Bank Department, Queen Victoria Street—Insanitary Condition, 692

Scotland—Commissioners of Northern Lights—Expenditure, 303
Intestates, 691

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 754, 758, 767

Public Buildings, Great Britain, 732

CAMPBELL, Sir A., *Renfrew, W.*

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1549

CAMPBELL, Sir G., *Kirkcaldy, &c.*

Accountant General, The—Disallowance of Expenses for the Egyptian Army, 1399, 1400
Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1756, 1758, 1762 ; Amendt. 1770, 1780, 1807, 1828, 1829, 1840

Parliament—Business of the House, 1410
Public Business—Committee of Supply, 585

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 404, 946, 982, 1652

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 749
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 758
Houses of Parliament, 727

CAMPBELL, Mr. H., *Fermanagh, S.*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1145

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Right Hon. H.,
Stirling, &c.

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1788, 1791, 1793

CAMPERDOWN, Earl of

Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defective Weapons and Stores, 7

CANTERBURY, Archbishop of
Church Patronage, 2R. 678
Glebe Lands, 1862; Comm. cl. 3, Amendt.
1709, 1710; add. cl. 1715

CAREW, Mr. J. L., *Kildare, N.*
Indian Ocean—The Seychelles—Mr. Clifford
Lloyd, 718

Central Asia

Central Asian Affairs—Official Information,
Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The
Under Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Mar 1, 881

*Reinforcement of the Chinese Garrison in
Turkistan*, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer,
The Under Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Mar 3, 1079

Russian Railway by the Caspian Sea, Question,
Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The
Under Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Mar 10, 1733

*Trade Communication between Tibet and
India*, Question, Mr. G. W. Balfour; Answer,
The Under Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)
Mar 7, 1404

CHAMBERLAIN, Right Hon. J., *Birmingham, W.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 206

Science and Art Department—The Patent
Museum, 1722

CHANCE, Mr. P. A., *Kilkenny, S.*

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure, 2R. 844
Ireland—Law and Justice—"Queen v. Dillon"
—The Jurors, 876; —Shorthand Report,
877

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 1001, 1002, 1310, 1313, 1627, 1653,
1698

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 832

CHANCELLOR, The LORD (*see* HALSBURY,
LORD)

CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND, The LORD
(*see* ASHBOURNE, LORD)

CHANCELLOR of the DUCHY of LANCASTER
(*see* MANNERS, Right Hon. Lord
J. J. R.)

CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (*see*
GOSCHEN, Right Hon. G. J.)

CHANNING, Mr. F. A., *Northampton, E.*
Africa (South)—Zululand, 457
Post Office Savings Bank—Deputation of
Clerks, 1403
Vaccination—Increase of Syphilis, 462

CHAPLIN, Right Hon. H., *Lincolnshire,
Sleaford*

Parliament—Business of the House—Order—
Royal Commission on Trade and Agriculture,
15

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 205, 217, 946, 949, 971, 1359, 1692

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1195

Charity Commissioners

Preparation of Education Schemes, Questions,
Mr. Rankin; Answers, The Vice President
of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)
Mar 10, 1730

Scheme for Christ's Hospital, Question, Mr.
F. S. Powell; Answer, The Vice President
of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke)
Feb 28, 701

The Dautsey Charity, Question, Mr. Jesse
Collings; Answer, The First Lord of the
Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 1, 893

CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E., *Edin-
burgh, S.*

First Offenders, 2R. 125

Navy—Intelligence Department—Disclosure of
Confidential Documents, 1083, 1084

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 244, 945, 1640, 1642

*Chili—Imprisonment of Carrol, a Sailor,
at Punta Arenas*

Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The
Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
(Sir James Fergusson) Feb 24, 471

*China and Burmah—The Delimitation
Commission*, 1886

Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The Under
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir
James Fergusson) Feb 18, 35

Church Patronage Bill [H.L.]

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*)

l. Read 1st * Feb 18 (No. 26)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2nd"
Feb 28, 678

Amend. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day
six months") (*The Lord Grimthorpe*);
Debate adjourned

Debate resumed Mar 3, 1027; on Question
that ("now,") &c., resolved in the affirmative;
Bill read 2nd

Personal Explanation, The Paymaster General
(Earl Beauchamp) Mar 4, 1227

Civil Service, The

*Civil Service Commissioners—Examinations
for Clerks of Works under the Board of
Works*, Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde;
Answer, The First Commissioner of Works
(Mr. Plunket) Mar 10, 1741

*Civil Service—Lower Division Clerks and
Writers*, Question, Mr. Morgan Howard;
Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury
(Mr. Jackson) Feb 24, 470

Civil Service, The—cont.

The Departmental Committee, Questions:
Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The
Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)
Mar 8, 1878

CLANCY, Mr. J. J., *Dublin Co., N.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate).
Res. 1853, 1675, 1696, 1697
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Superannuations and Retired Allowances,
1518

CLARK, Dr. G. B., *Caithness*

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Ser-
vices, 1838
Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1569
Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 552
Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882
—Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address,
277
Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commis-
sion, Motion for an Address, 852, 853
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scot-
land), 2R. 1549
London Corporation (Charges of Malversa-
tion), Motion for Adjournment, 915
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. Motion for Adjournment, 1647, 1648
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in An-
swer to, Report, 87, 88
Post Office Mail Contract (Highland Fisheries
Company, Limited), Res. 387
Scotland—Questions
Commissioners of Northern Lights — Ex-
penditure, 302
General Election, 1886—Charges of Re-
turning Officers, 1572
Salmon Fisheries, 1405
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Adelaide Exhibition, 1522
Colonies, Grants in Aid, 1516
Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1499
Pauper Lunatics, Scotland, 1519
Post Office, 1537
Treasury Chest Robbery, 1529

Clyde Navigation Bill [Lords] (by Order)

c. Consideration deferred, after short debate
Mar 7, 1881

Moved, "That the Bill, as amended, be now
considered" (Sir Charles Forster) Mar 8,
1852

Amend. to leave out "now," add "upon this
day six months" (Colonel Malcolm) v.;
Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;"
after short debate, Question put; A. 200,
N. 100; M. 100 (D. L. 46)

Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill con-
sidered

*Coal Mines—Explosion at Cwch Rhondda,
South Wales*

Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Se-
cretary of State for the Home Department
(Mr. Matthews) Feb 21, 1881

COBB, Mr. H. P., *Warwick, S.E., Rugby*
Allotments for Small Householders, 469

COGHILL, Mr. D. H., *Newcastle-under-
Lyme*

Inland Revenue—The Dog Tax, 718

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 341, 343

COHEN, Mr. L. L., *Paddington, N.*

Burials—Disturbances at Stratford Cemetery
—Whitechapel, 892

London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance
—Extension of the Impost to the Metro-
politan Area, 1075

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation),
Motion for Adjournment, 913

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 544, 545

Railways (India)—Borrowing Powers, 1272

COLERIDGE, Hon. B., *Sheffield, Attercliffe*

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Ser-
vices, 1839

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Admiralty and War Office, The New,
747

Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1171

Trade and Commerce—Manufacture and
False Marking of Goods at Sheffield, 45

COLOMB, Captain J. C.R., *Tower Hamlets,
Bow, &c.*

Alien Acts—Immigration of Destitute Aliens,
1724

Metropolis—Foreign Labour in East London,
1724

Parks—Victoria Park, 478

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Local Government Board, &c. 813
Public Education (Ireland), 1452

Colonial Service (Pensions) Bill

(Sir Herbert Maxwell, Sir Henry Holland, Mr.
Jackson) [Bill 158]

c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^o"
Feb 24, 1852; Moved, "That the Debate be
now adjourned" (Dr. Tanner); after short
debate, Motion withdrawn; Original Ques-
tion put, and agreed to; Bill read 2^o

COLONIES—Secretary of State for (*see*
HOLLAND, Right Hon. Sir H. T.)

COMMERELL, Admiral Sir J. E., *South-
ampton*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 766

COMMINS, Dr. A., *Roscommon, S.*

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 555

Ireland—Letter of the Archbishop of Cashel,
695

COMMINS, DR. A.—*cont.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 533, 548, 931, 1314
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1131

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION—
Vice President (*see* DYKE, Right Hon. Sir W. H.)

CONDON, MR. T. J., *Tipperary, E.*
Ireland—Cashel Town Commissioners—Audit of Accounts, 157

*Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—
Outbreak of Anthrax in Essex*
Question, Mr. Beadel; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) *Feb 25, 566*

CONWAY, MR. M., *Leitrim, N.*
Ireland—Questions
Evictions—Evictions in Leitrim, 711
Prison Service—"Intern Officers," 891
Prisons—Richmond Prison, 176, 1384, 1386
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1434, 1435

CONYBEARE, MR. C. A. V., *Cornwall, Camborne*
Admiralty—Dockyards—Devonport Dockyard—The Fire Brigade Staff, 1391
Subscriptions to the Imperial Institute, 175, 1408

Army—Imperial Institute—Raglan Barracks, 708, 709

Burials—Disturbances at Stratford Cemetery—Whitechapel, 891

Removal of the Dead from Churchyards and Burial Grounds, 22

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 553, 554
Commissioners of Northern Lights (Scotland)—Expenditure, 302

Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment, 2R. 128

Imperial Institute Buildings—The Competition, 1273

India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 46

Ireland—Questions
Distress, &c.—Distress in Kerry, 173
Ejectments—Knockmoyleen, Ballycroy, Co. Mayo, 574

Royal Commission on Agriculture—Evictions, 1389

Royal Irish Constabulary—Evictions at Ventry, 176

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 907

Lunacy—Detention of an Alleged Lunatic, 36

Metropolis Management Act, 1878—Form of Certificate, 295, 297

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 505, 522, 523, 978, 979

Police Clothing—System of Contracts, 1070

CONYBEARE, MR. C. A. V.—*cont.*

Post Office (England and Wales)—Questions
Appointment to Postmasterships, 1085
Secretary's Office—Promotion, 889
Transmission of a False and Unsigned Telegram, 38

Public Service—Retired Pay or Pensions—The Return, 1589

Right of Public Meeting (England and Ireland)—The Plan of Campaign—Suppression of Public Meetings, 1274, 1275

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 740
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1147, 1149, 1150, 1152, 1195

Marlborough House, 726

Post Office, 1532, 1533

Science and Art Department, &c. 1220

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [H.L.]

(*The Lord Hobhouse*)

l. Read 2^a, and referred to a Select Committee, after short debate *Mar 1, 862* (No. 13)
Select Committee nominated *Mar 8*; List of the Committee, 1551

CORBET, MR. W. J., *Wicklow, E.*

Ireland—Questions

Criminal Lunatic Asylum—Occupation by the Police, 167

Evictions—The Return, 31

Fishery Piers and Harbours—Greystones Harbour, 697

Inland Fisheries—The River Avoca, 18

Mining Industries, 31

Lunacy Laws—Alleged Detention of a Female, 710, 1734

Coroners' Inquests—View of the Bodies

Question, Mr. Paulton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 25, 578*

Corporation Officials—Bribery by Commissions

Questions, Mr. Ilworth; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18, 33*

COSSHAM, MR. H., *Bristol, E.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 348, 950, 1307, 1682

County Courts (Expenses) Bill

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Attorney General, Sir Herbert Maxwell*)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Feb 22* [Bill 177]
Read 2^o *Feb 28, 845*

County Courts [Expenses]

c. Res. considered in Committee, and agreed to *Mar 7, 1551*

Res. reported, and, after short debate, agreed to *Mar 8, 1664*

- COURTNEY, Mr. L. H. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker), *Cornwall, Bodmin*
 Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 152, 452
 Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1762, 1770, 1795, 1798, 1816, 1824, 1830, 1831, 1834, 1838, 1842, 1844
 Clyde Navigation, *Consid.* 1567
 Parliament—Order—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—The Adjourned Debate, 894
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 365, 1294, 1660
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 772
 Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1107, 1109, 1114, 1119, 1120, 1121, 1144, 1149, 1150, 1155, 1159, 1180, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1195, 1196, 1207, 1213
 Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 822, 825, 826, 834
 Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1474, 1481, 1504
 Houses of Parliament, 728
 Local Government Board, &c. 819
 Post Office, 1532, 1533
 Public Buildings (Great Britain), 731, 738
 Public Education (Ireland), 1445, 1452, 1454
 Science and Art Department, &c. 839, 840, 1418, 1424, 1434, 1435, 1436
 Superannuations and Retired Allowances, 1518
 Treasury Chest Robbery, 1531
 Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1512
 Sutton District Water, Res. 14
- COWPER, Earl
 Church Patronage, 2R. 1032
- COX, Mr. J. R., *Clare, E.*
 Ireland—Questions
 Crime and Outrage—Dynamite Outrage at Residence of Mr. T. Rice Henn, 873
 Evictions—Eviction of Mrs. Conlon, Co. Roscommon, 155, 156
 Labourers Acts, 1883 and 1885—Ennis Poor Law Union—Scheme under the Acts, 16, 1384
 Law and Justice—Mr. F. Morrice, Co. Clare Grand Jury, 294, 872;—Secretaries of Grand Juries, 467
 Outrages, &c. Co. Clare, 474
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, &c. 839, 840
- COZENS-HARDY, Mr. H. H., *Norfolk, N.*
 Burials—Attleborough New Cemetery, 40
- CRANBORNE, Viscount, *Lancashire, N.E., Darwen*
 Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 1547
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1664
- CRANBROOK, Viscount (Lord President of the Council)
 Justices' Jurisdiction, 2R. 436
- CRAWFORD, Earl of
 Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R. 859
- CRAWFORD, Mr. D., *Lanark, N.E.*
 Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882—Dollar Institution, Motion for an Address, 278
 Parliament—Business of the House, 1740
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 330, 332
 Scotland—Law and Justice—Trial of Peter White and others charged with Mobbing and Rioting at Motherwell, 1059
- Criminal Law (Costs) Bill
 (*Mr. Milvain, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Molloy*)
 c. Ordered; read 1^o * Mar 10 [Bill 191]
- Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure Bill
 (*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Secretary Balfour, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
 c. 2R. deferred Feb 28, 844 [Bill 131]
- Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2) Bill
 (*Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Wallace, Mr. Provand*)
 c. 2R., after short debate, Debate adjourned Mar 2, 1020 [Bill 100]
- CROSS, Viscount (Secretary of State for India)
 Glebe Lands, 1363; Comm. cl. 3, 1707, 1710; cl. 5, 1711; cl. 11, 1713, 1714
 India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 289
- CROSSLEY, Sir S., *Suffolk, Lowestoft*
 North Sea Fisheries—Fishing Boat "Sky-lark," 886
 North Sea Fisheries Convention—Damages by Belgian Owners, 886
- CROSSMAN, Major General Sir W., *Portsmouth*
 Army—Purchase of Army Horses in Canada, 164
 Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, Amendt. 1830, 1831, 1833, 1850, 1855
 Navy—Dockyards—Fatal Accident at Portsmouth Dockyard, 1078
- CUBITT, Right Hon. G., *Surrey, Mid*
 Sutton District Water, Res. 13

Currency, The

Deterioration of the Gold Coinage—Half-Sovereigns, Question, Mr. Montagu; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Feb* 24, 468; Question, Mr. Dixon-Maitland; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 8, 1581

Gold and Silver Currency (Royal Commission)—The First Report, Question, Mr. Webster; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Feb* 24, 459; Question, Observations, The Duke of Marlborough; Reply, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) *Feb* 28, 671

CURRIE, Sir D., Perthshire, W.

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 97

CURZON, Viscount, Bucks, Wycombe

Army and Navy Estimates—Reference to a Committee of the Whole House, 179

Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment Bill

(*Sir Arthur Rollit, Mr. S. King, Mr. Gourley*)
c. Read 2°, after debate *Feb* 18, 127 [Bill 155]

Customs—Outdoor Officers.

Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar* 8, 1591

DAWNAY, Colonel Hon. L. P., York, N.R., Thirsk

Rivers Pollution—Pollution of the Upper Thames, 467

Water Supply (Metropolis)—Chelsea Water Company, 881

*Defences of the Empire—see title Imperial and Colonial Defences**DE LA WARR, Earl*

Malta, Motion for Papers, 1227
Potter's Patent, 2R. 557

DE LISLE, Mr. E. J. L. M. P., Leicestershire, Mid

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 397, 398

War Office (Ordnance Department)—Contract for Cartridges for Queensland, 1583

DENMAN, Lord

Appellate Jurisdiction, 3R. Amendt. 8, 9
Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 432; 3R. Amendt. 1254

Depression of Trade and Agriculture, Royal Commission on—The Report—Cheap Edition

Question, Sir John R. Mowbray; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Feb* 18, 44

DERBY, Earl of

India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 7, 280

DE WORMS, Baron H. (Secretary to the Board of Trade), Liverpool, East Toxteth

"Board of Trade Journal"—Advertising Agents, 580

Commissioners of Irish Lights—Daunt's Rock, Cork Harbour, 693

Commissioners of Northern Lights (Scotland)—Expenditure, 303

Dover Harbour Board—The Accounts, 1719

Egypt—Light Dues on Shipping, 162

Emigration Statistics for 1886—The Return, 578

Expenditure of Lighthouse Boards, 470

Harbours, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act, 1847
—Harbours Exempt—Life-Saving Apparatus, 289

Harbours, &c. (Scotland)—Gigulum Sound, 294
Limited Liability Companies, 889

Loss of Life from Fishing Vessels, 701

Mercantile Marine—Licences for Foreign Pilots, 1259

Shipwrecks on the Glamorganshire Coast—Coastguard Station at Southerndown, 1062

Merchandise Marks Act Consolidation, 1260, 1581

Merchant Shipping—Loss of the "Caterina," 290

Merchant Shipping Acts—Boat Accommodation on Passenger Ships, 876

Transfer of British Ships to Foreign Owners, 1392

Metropolis—Foreign Labour in East London, 1724

Parliament—Privilege—Premature Publication of the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 130; Personal Explanation, 184, 185

Port and Docks Board, Dublin—Tenders, 30

Royal Commission on Trawling, 1885, 1264

Sea Fisheries—Collection of Statistics, 43

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 769, 771, 773, 775

Trade and Commerce—Official Returns of Exports and Imports, 1571

Watch Trade—Hall-Marking of Watch Cases—Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 722, 1078

Waltham Watch Manufacturing Co. 1263

Weights and Measures Act, 1878—"Further Legislation," 25

Wrecks and Loss of Life in the Bristol Channel, 290

DICKSON, Major A. G., Dover

Dover Harbour Board—The Accounts, 1718

DILLON, Mr. J., Mayo, E.

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1799, 1802

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—The Trial of the Walkers—Challenging the Jury, 1067

DILLON, Mr. J.—*cont.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1299, 1600, 1625, 1627, 1682, 1688, 1704
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Colonies, Grants in Aid, 1515
 Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1090, 1104, 1107, 1110, 1184, 1205, 1207
 Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1475, 1487
 Superannuations and Retired Allowances, 1519
 Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1509, 1512; Amendt. 1515

DILLWYN, Mr. L. L., *Swansea, Town*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 549, 604; Motion for Adjournment, 1658
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, &c., Motion for Adjournment, 841

DIMSDALE, Baron R., *Herts, Hitchin*

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Medals for Volunteer Non-Commissioned Officers, 1257

DIXON-HARTLAND, Mr. F. D., *Middlesex, Uxbridge*

Currency—Half-Sovereigns, 1581
 London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance—Extension of the Impost to the Metropolitan Area, 1056, 1575, 1576
 Metropolitan—Church Parade of Socialists at St. Paul's Cathedral, 725
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 801

DODDS, Mr. J., *Stockton*

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1863

Dogs—Liability for shooting Stray Dogs

Question, Mr. McLaren; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Mar 4, 1260

DORINGTON, Sir J. E., *Gloucester, Tewkesbury*

War Office—Bursting of Rifled Guns—The Return, 1725

Dover (Corporation) Harbour Bill

1. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a" (The Earl Stanhope) Feb 28, 656
 Amendt. to leave out ("now,"), add ("this day six months") (The Earl Granville); after short debate, on Question, That ("now,"), &c.; Cont. 50, Not-Cont. 45; Majority 5
 Resolved in the affirmative; Bill read 2^a

Dover Harbour Board—The Accountants

Question, Major Dickson; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 10, 1718

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order Bill

(Mr. Jackson, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)

c. Report * Feb 21 [Bill 127]
 Read 3^o * Feb 22
 l. Read 1^a * Feb 24 (No. 29)
 Read 2^a * Mar 7
 Report * Mar 10

Dublin Southern District Tramways Bill (by Order)

c. 2R. deferred Feb 25, 562
 Read 2^o Feb 28, 690

Dublin Southern District Tramways Bill [Repayment of Deposit]

c. Considered in Committee, and agreed to Mar 9, 1665

Duchy of Lancaster—Leases of Land in Yorkshire

Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) Mar 10, 1726

DUFF, Mr. R. W., *Banffshire*

Admiralty—Report of the Committee on Naval Contracts, 180

DUNCAN, Colonel F., *Finsbury, Holborn*

Army—Promotion of Staff Paymasters, 1731
 Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1840
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1479

DYKE, Right Hon. Sir W. H. (Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education), *Kent, Dartford*

Charity Commissioners—Education Schemes, 1730

Scheme for Christ's Hospital, 701
 Education Department—Questions
 Building Grants to Science Schools and Art Schools, 572

New Code, 1887, 888;—Article 114, 109, 1736

Payment by Results—Examinations, 1400
 Science and Art Department—Elementary Scholarships, 465;—The Patent Museum, 1722

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1426, 1441

Ecclesiastical Commissioners (Income and Expenditure in Wales)

Moved, for a "Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the Bishops, Chapters, and Archdeacons, &c. in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales" (Mr. Kenyon) Feb 24, 556; after short debate, Motion deferred

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) (Questions)

Building Grants to Science Schools and Art Schools, Questions, Mr. L. Fry, Mr. Woodall; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Feb 25*, 572

Elementary Education—Irregular Attendance—Mr. Paget, Wandsworth Police Court, Questions, Mr. H. J. Wilson, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18*, 29

Local Colleges in England and Wales, Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 7*, 1383

Payment by Results—Examinations, Question, Mr. W. G. Cavendish Bentinck; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Mar 7*, 1400

Science and Art Department—Elementary Scholarships, Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Feb 24*, 465;—*Regulations as to Drawing*, Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Mar 8*, 1584

The New Code, 1887, Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Mar 1*, 888;—*Articles 114, 109*, Question, Mr. Kenyon; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Mar 10*, 1736

Egypt

Disallowance of Expenses for the Egyptian Army—The Accountant General, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 7*, 1399

Enforcement of the Corvée, Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 22*, 300

Light Dues on Shipping, Question, Mr. T. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Feb 21*, 162

Right of Commercial Convention with Foreign Powers, Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 18*, 35

Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission, Questions, Mr. Howorth, Sir Henry Tyler, Mr. Anderson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 21*, 166

Slave Trade—Revival in the Soudan and the Red Sea Littoral, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 18*, 43; Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 1*, 880

Egypt—The Native Egyptian Army

Moved for, "Despatch addressed to Sir H. Drummond Wolff by Lieutenant-Colonel Parr from the headquarters of the Egyptian Army at Cairo, dated 17th January, 1886, in reference to the efficiency and gallantry of the native Egyptian troops, and the friendly relations now existing between the English officers serving in the army of the Khedive and the native officers and men" (*The Earl of Harrowby*) *Mar 4*, 1253; after a short debate, Motion withdrawn

ELCHO, Lord, Ipswich

Bulgaria—Recent Outbreak—Use of Torture on the Captured Insurgents, 1752

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment Bill [H.L.] (The Lord Thurlow)

l. Read 2^a, after short debate *Mar 1*, 851 (No. 10)

ELLENBOROUGH, Lord

Army—Insanitary Condition of Knightsbridge and Dublin Barracks, 560

Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defective Weapons and Stores, 6

ELLIOT, Hon. A. R. D., Roxburgh

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 988

ELLIOT, Hon. H. F. H., Ayrshire, N.

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, Motion for an Address, 852

ELLIOT, Mr. G. W., York, N.R., Richmond

Horses—Prohibition of Export by Foreign Countries, 303

ELLIS, Mr. J., Leicestershire, Bosworth

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1170

ELLIS, Mr. J. E., Nottingham, Rushcliffe

Duchy of Lancaster—Leases of Land in Yorkshire, 1726

Ireland—Questions

Irish Juries—Appointment of Select Committee, 178

Jurors' Act—Connaught Winter Assizes—The Clerk of the Crown, 165

Law and Justice—Mr. John Redington, Sub-Sheriff of Co. Galway, 1060

Magistracy—Proclamation of Public Meetings, 1259

Privy Council—Dates of Meeting, August, 1886, to January, 1887, 42

Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land Act, 1885), 893

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Amend. 517, 1302, 1676

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 772

ELLIS, Mr. T. E., Merionethshire

Ecclesiastical Commissioners (Income and Expenditure in Wales), Motion for a Paper, 556

Emigration Statistics for 1886 — The Return

Question, Mr. S. Smith; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 25, 578

ESMONDE, Sir T. H. G., Dublin Co., S.

Civil Service Commissioners — Examinations for Clerk of Works under the Board of Works, 1741

Ireland—Questions

Evictions—The Brooke Estate, Coolgreany, 1080

Mortgages and Charges on Landed Property, 1086

Public Meetings, 884

Literature, Science, and Art—The Challoner Smith Collection of Mezzotint Engravings, 1080

ESHER, Lord (Master of the Rolls)

Justices' Jurisdiction, 2R. 435

Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 431

ESSLEMONT, Mr. P., Aberdeenshire, E.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Motion for Adjournment, 652; Amendt. 653, 655, 984, 986, 1660

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 808

Evictions at Burradon Colliery, County Northumberland

Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Feb 25, 579

EWING, Sir A. Orr, Dumbarton

Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1567

Exhibition of 1851—Landed Property held by the Commissioners—Amount Mortgaged to Greenwich Hospital

Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 8, 1586

EYRE, Colonel H., Lincolnshire, Gainsborough

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—The Volunteers—Extra Pay to Permanent Staff, 39

FENWICK, Mr. C., Northumberland, Wansbeck

Evictions at Burradon Colliery, Co. Northumberland, 579

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 600

FERGUSON, Right Hon. Sir J. (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Manchester, N.E.

Africa (East)—Portugal—Zanzibar Coast, 715

Rumoured Annexation of Territory, 1721

Africa (West Coast)—Mr. H. H. Johnston, Her Majesty's Vice Consul, 1742

Alien Acts—Immigration of Destitute Aliens, 1725

America—Questions

North American Fisheries—Canada and the United States—The Fishery Disputes, 291, 713

South America—British Guiana and Venezuela—The Boundary Line, 1403, 1721;

—Chili—Imprisonment of a Sailor named Carrol at Punta Arenas, 472

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1786, 1787

Asia—Central Asian Affairs—Questions

Official Information, 881

Reinforcement of the Chinese Garrisons in Turkestan, 1079

Russian Railway by the Caspian Sea, 1733

Trade Communication between Thibet and India, 1405

Borneo—The Limbang River, 699

Bulgaria, Affairs of—Questions

Mr. Condie Stephen, 479

Recent outbreak—Use of Torture on the Captured Insurgents, 1752

The Debate, 181

China and Burmah—The Delimitation Commission, 1886, 36

Egypt—Questions

Enforcement of the Corvée, 300

Proposal of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, 167

Right of Commercial Convention with Foreign Powers, 35

Great Britain and Venezuela—Cessation of Diplomatic Relations, 724;—Protection of British Subjects, 1084

Horses—Prohibition of Export by Foreign Countries, 304, 1078

Islands of the Pacific—New Hebrides—Fortifications of the French, 299

Mozambique—Protection of British Subjects—H.M.S. "Reindeer," 1742

North Sea Fisheries Convention—Damages by Belgian Owners, 886

Liquor Traffic—The International Conference, 1726

Pacific Ports—Ill-Usage of British Seamen, 42, 300

Parliament—Business of the House—Order of Supply, 1361, 1362

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 63, 66, 68

Slave Trade—Revival in the Soudan and the Red Sea Littoral, 43

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 762

Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1459,

1461, 1465, 1482, 1484, 1487, 1489, 1496,

1498

Foreign Office, 768

Trade and Commerce—International Conference on the Sugar Bounties, 1589

Trade and Manufacture—French Prohibition of English Leather, 1395, 1396

FEVERSHAM, Earl of

Army—Insanitary Condition of Knightsbridge and Dublin Barracks, 561
Globe Lands, Comm. cl. 11, 1713

FIELD, Admiral E., *Sussex, Eastbourne*

Navy—Stranding of the Gunboat "Firm"—Sir William Thompson's Deep Sea Sounding Machine, 576
Parliament—Business of the House—Votes and Proceedings, 46
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1152

FINLAY, Mr. R. B., *Inverness, &c.*

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, Motion for an Address, 852

FINUCANE, Mr. J., *Limerick, E.*

Ireland—Evictions—Mr. Edmond Davoren, Kilmallock, 1719, 1720

First Offenders Bill

(Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Randolph Spencer Churehill, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Addison, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy) [Bill 132]

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^o" Feb 18, 115; after debate, Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (Mr. Edward Harrington); Question, "That 'now,' &c.," put, and negatived
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2^o Committee; Report Mar 7, 1544 [Bill 189]

FISHER, Mr. W. H., *Fulham*

Law and Police—The Recent Socialist Demonstration (Metropolis), 1069

Fisheries (Sea)—Collection of Statistics

Question, Mr. Rowntree; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 18, 42

Fishing Vessels, Loss of Life from

Question, Mr. A. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 28, 701

FITZGERALD, Lord

Ireland—Law and Justice—Irish Jury Laws, 141, 1234

FLETCHER, Sir H. T., *Sussex, Lewes*

Queen's Jubilee Celebration—A Review, 1735

FLYNN, Mr. J. C., *Cork, N.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Motion for Adjournment, 386, 389, 643, 1610
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Post Office, 1536

FOREIGN AFFAIRS—Secretary of State
(see SALISBURY, Marquess of)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS—Under Secretary of State (see FERGUSSON, Right Hon. Sir J.)

Foreign Powers—Advice and Remonstrance—Explanation

Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 24, 483

FORSTER, Sir C., *Walsall*

Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1381

FORTESCUE, Earl

Church Patronage, 2R. 1047

FORWOOD, Mr. A. B. (Secretary to the Admiralty), *Lancashire, Ormskirk*

Contract System of the Admiralty—The Royal Commission—Irregular Publication of Evidence, 1587
Merchant Shipping—Assistance to Vessels near Milford Haven, 289
Navy, Health of the, 1885—Insanitary Condition of Water Tanks at Malta, 875

FOWLER, Sir R. N., *London*

Admiralty and War Office, Motion for a Select Committee, 1361
Africa (South)—Progress of Affairs—Lord Salisbury's Letter in "The Times," 583
High Court of Justice in England—Scotch Cases—"Jones v. Scottish Accident Insurance Company," 1574
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1543
London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 903, 907; Motion for a Select Committee, 1224
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 622
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 94
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, &c. 839

FOWLER, Right Hon. H. H., *Wolverhampton, E.*

Election Expenses, 1886—The Return, 299
Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 843
Parliament—Business of the House, 484
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 408, 697, 1655, 1702
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 795, 798
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 759
Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 850

Foyes Harbour (Transfer) Bill

(Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Jackson)

c. Read 2^o, and committed to a Select Committee Feb 24, 551 [Bill 169]

Foynes Harbour (Transfer) Bill—cont.

Moved, "That the Committee do consist of Five Members" (*Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald*); after short debate, Amendt. to leave out "Five," insert "Seven" (*Dr. Tanner*); Question proposed, "That 'Five' &c.;" after further short debate, Question put, and negatived; Question, "That 'Seven' &c.," put, and agreed to

Ordered, That Four be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection

And, on Mar 7, Committee nominated as follows: — *Mr. Matthew Kenny*, Admiral *Mayne*, *Mr. Schwann*, *Mr. Smith-Barry*

FRASER, General C. C., Lambeth, N.

Admiralty—Naval Lieutenants—Resignation of Commissions in Time of Peace, 1065

Army—Reported Reduction of Horse Artillery, 694

Retirement of Commanding Officers, 1723

Free Libraries Acts Consolidation Bill

(*Mr. Caldwell*, *Dr. Cameron*, *Mr.*

Cameron Corbett)

c. Bill withdrawn * Feb 23

[Bill 115]

FRY, Mr. L., Bristol, N.

Education Department—Building Grants to Science Schools and Art Schools, 572

FRY, Mr. T., Darlington

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 443

FULTON, Mr. J. F., West Ham, N.

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 143

Game Laws—Sale of a Hare without Licence

Question, *Dr. Tanner*; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Matthews*) Mar 10, 1743

GARDNER, Mr. H., Essex, Saffron Walden

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1698

Parliament—Public Business—Railway Rates and Land Reform, 47

Prison Labour—Mat-Weaving, 37

Tithe (England and Wales), 1591

GEDGE, Mr. S., Stockport

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 505, 993, 1357

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1196

GENT-DAVIS, Mr. R., Lambeth, Kensington

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1700

GILES, Mr. A., Southampton

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 451

GILHOOLY, Mr. J., Cork, W.

Ireland—Law and Police—Durrus Petty Sessions—Hegarty, 153

GILL, Mr. H. J., Limerick

Ireland—Law and Justice—Abduction of Ethel Roe, 1577, 1578

Prisons Board—Richmond Bridewell, Dublin, 1385

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1002, 1678

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Education, Ireland, 1445

GILL, Mr. T. P., Louth, S.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 220, 623, 625, 932, 1005, 1308, 1680

GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E., Edinburgh, Mid Lothian

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 910, 916

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 190, 204, 955, 1281, 1291

Parliament—Public Business, 585, 1412

Glebe Lands Bill [H.L.] (The Viscount Cross)

l. Question, The Archbishop of Canterbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) Mar 7, 1362

Committee Mar 10, 1706 (Nos. 16-41)

GODSON, Mr. A. F., Kidderminster

Post Office—Parcel Post to New Zealand, 1590

GOLDSMID, Sir J., St. Pancras, S.

Admiralty and War Offices—The New Buildings, 16

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 800

GORST, Sir J. E. (Under Secretary of State for India), Chatham

India—Questions

Army Clothing Department—Exclusion of European Articles, 691

Burmah (Upper)—The Military Expedition—Alleged Cruelties, 888, 1406

Collection of Revenue—Magisterial Powers, 1390

Extension of the Railway System in India and Burmah, 454

Pensions for General Services—Amount paid in England, 581

Post Office—Telegraph Department—Presidency Allowance, 37;—Telegraphic Messages, 582

GORST, Sir J. E.—*cont.*

- India (Madras)—Questions
 - Army Clothing Department—Exclusion of European Articles, 884, 1739
 - Board of Inland Revenue, 697
 - Collector of Chingleput, 695
 - Mr. H. E. Sullivan, Covenanted Civil Service, 1391
 - Uncovenanted Civil Service, 291
- India—Railways—Questions
 - Bengal-Nagpur Railway, 1257, 1258
 - Borrowing Powers, 1272
 - Extension of the Railway System, 569

GOSCHEN, Rt. Hon. G. J. (Chancellor of the Exchequer), *St. George's, Hanover Square*

- Accountant General—Disallowance of Expenses for the Egyptian Army, 1399
- Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1791, 1794, 1795, 1802, 1810, 1844, 1845
- Civil Service Writers—Departmental Committee, 1579
- Currency—Deterioration of the Gold Coinage, 469;—Half-Sovereigns, 1581
- Education—Local Colleges in England and Wales, 1383
- Inland Revenue—Questions
 - Assessments in Ealing and Brentford, 464
 - Dog Tax, 719
 - Income Tax—Allowance to Colliery Proprietors, 1731;—Assessment on Public Baths and Wash-houses, *St. Pancras*, 297;—Collection, 461;—Married Women's Property Act, 577
 - Ireland—Custom House, Dublin, 170;—"Death Duties" on Land in Ulster, 1268, 1720, 1721
- Literature, Science, and Art—National Science Collections—The Inter-Departmental Committee, 1396
- Schools at South Kensington—Surplus of Exhibition of 1851, 1745
- Magistracy (England and Wales)—Mr. George Fidell Rowley, High Sheriff of Rutlandshire, 1270
- Parliament—The Chiltern Hundreds—Withdrawal of Application, 1754
- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 241, 244, 591, 592, 594, 616, 936, 941, 973, 1338, 1633, 1636, 1637, 1701
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 799, 802
- Trustee Savings Banks—Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank, 579, 879
- Ways and Means—Commissioners of Inland Revenue—Return of Income Tax—Dividend Warrants of Railway Companies, 1061

GOURLEY, Mr. E. T., *Sunderland*

- North American Fisheries—Canada and the United States—The Fishery Disputes, 291
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1471, 1474, 1489

GRAHAM, Mr. R. C., *Lanark, N.W.*

- Scotland—Mines—Assistant Inspectorship of Mines in Western Division, 39

GRANVILLE, Earl

- Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. Amendt. 657, 666

Great Eastern Railway Bill (by Order)

- c. Read 2^o, after short debate Feb 21, 142

Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies Bill (by Order)

- c. Read 2^o, after short debate Feb 24, 437

Greenwich Hospital Funds—Investments

- Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) Mar 3, 1088; Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 10, 1722
- [See title *Exhibition of 1851*]

GRIMTHORPE, Lord

- Church Patronage, 2R. Amendt. 683
- Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 665
- Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 3, 1708
- Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. Amendt. 132; cl. 3, Amendt. 133; cl. 4, Amendt. 139

Hall-Marking

- The Watch Trade—Hall-Marking of Watch Cases—Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill*, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 28, 722
- The Waltham Watch Manufacturing Company*, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 4, 1262

HALSBURY, Lord (Lord Chancellor)

- Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 866
- Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 667
- Justices' Jurisdiction, 2R. 435
- Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 431; Comm. cl. 2, 1025
- Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. cl. 3, 137, 138; cl. 42, 141; Postponed cl. 3, Amendt. 869, 870; Report, 1705, 1706
- Potter's Patent, 2R. 558

HALSEY, Mr. T. F., *Herts, Watford*

- Ways and Means—Commissioners of Inland Revenue—Return of Income Tax—Dividend Warrants of Railway Companies, 1061

HAMBRO, Colonel J. C. T., *Dorset, S.*

- Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation, 2R. 1056

HAMILTON, Right Hon. Lord G. F. (First Lord of the Admiralty)

Middlesex, Ealing

- Admiralty—Questions
 - Coaling Stations—Seychelles, 714
 - Dockyards—Devonport Dockyard—The Fire Brigade Staff, 1391;—Subscriptions to the Imperial Institute, 175

HAMILTON, Right Hon. Lord G. F.—*cont.*

- Guardship "Belleisle"—Repairs, 170, 1739
- Naval Guns and Ammunition—Papers and Correspondence, 1407
- Naval Lieutenants—Resignation of Commissions in Time of Peace, 1066
- Naval Operations in New Guinea, 35
- Report of the Committee on Naval Contracts, 180
- Sale of Confidential Drawings, &c. in Chatham Dockyard, 1744
- Subscriptions to the Imperial Institute, 1408, 1409
- Exhibition of 1851—Landed Property held by the Commissioners—Amount Mortgaged to Greenwich Hospital, 1586
- London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 908, 909
- Merchant Shipping—Steam Tug off Mumbles Head, 1576
- Navy—Questions
 - Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword-Bayonets—H.M.S. "Acorn," 1267
 - Dockyards—Defective Sheers at Pembroke Dockyard, 703, 1066 ;—Fatal Accident at Portsmouth Dockyard, 1079
 - Greenwich Hospital Funds—Investments, 1723
 - H.M.S. "Ajax"—Gun Practice at Innellan, on the Clyde, 179, 570
 - H.M.S. "Belleisle"—The "Broad Arrow and Military Magazine," 1087
 - Intelligence Department—Disclosure of Confidential Documents, 1083, 1084
 - Manufacturing Department—Nordenfellt Guns, 1392
 - Stranding of the Gunboat "Firm"—Sir William Thompson's Deep Sea Sounding Machine, 576
 - North Sea Fisheries—The Fishing Boat "Skylark," 886
 - Slave Traffic—East Coast of Africa, 880

HAMILTON, Lord C. J., *Liverpool, West Derby*

- Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies, 2R. 438

HAMILTON, Lord E., *Tyrone, N.*

- Ireland—Glebe Land Purchasers, 1264
- Post Office—Telegraph Extension, Co. Donegal, 1265

HANBURY, Mr. R. W., *Preston*

- Admiralty—Sale of Confidential Drawings, &c. in Chatham Dockyard, 1744
- Africa—Gold Coast—Contemplated Acquisition of Territory by England, 1081
- Asia—Central Asian Affairs—Official Information, 881
- Navy—Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets—H.M.S. "Acorn," 1266
- Manufacturing Department—Nordenfellt Guns, 1391
- Slave Traffic—East Coast of Africa, 880
- War Office (Ordnance Department)—Contract for Cartridges for Queensland, 1582
- Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets, 479

Harbours

- Harbours, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act, 1847*
- Harbours Exempt—Life-Saving Apparatus*, Question, Mr. Maclure ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 22, 288
- Harbour Accommodation Committee*, Question, Mr. Marjoribanks ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 1, 892 [See title *Dover Harbour Board*]

HARGREAVES, Right Hon. Sir W. G. V., *Derby*

- Parliament—Public Business—Committee of Supply, 584
- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 199, 205, 252, 264, 267, 268, 269, 927, 935, 936, 938, 940, 966, 972, 1000, 1299, 1327
- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 756
- Science and Art Department, &c. 835

HARDWICKE, Earl of

- Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 3, 1709

HARRINGTON, Mr. E., *Kerry, W.*

- Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 555
- First Offenders, 2R. Amend. 126
- India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 46
- Ireland (Distress, &c.)—Distress in Kerry, 174
- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 644, 951, 1006, 1007, 1612, 1699, 1700
- Parliament—Order—Withdrawal of a Question from the Notice Paper, 1752, 1753, 1754
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1121
- Houses of Parliament, 727, 728

HARRINGTON, Mr. T. C., *Dublin, Harbour*

- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 947, 948, 1004, 1325, 1326
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1111, 1114

HARRIS, Lord (Under Secretary of State for War)

- Army—Insanitary Condition of Knightsbridge and Dublin Barracks, 560, 561
- Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and Royal Military Academy, Woolwich—Report of the Board of Visitors, 670
- Horse Breeding and Supply for Military and Industrial Purposes, 1373, 1380
- Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defective Weapons and Stores, Motion for Returns, 5, 6, 7
- War Office (Ordnance Department)—Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets, Explanation, 279

HARROWBY, Earl of

- Egypt—Native Egyptian Army, Motion for a Paper, 1252
- Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defective Weapons and Stores, Motion for Returns, 1, 7

HARTINGTON, Right Hon. Marquess of, Lancashire, Rossendale

- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 319, 332, 939, 1343, 1700

HAYDEN, Mr. L. P., Leitrim, S.

- Ireland—Post Office—Delivery between Drumlish and Fairnaught, Co. Leitrim, 1259
- Letter Carrier between Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumsna, 292
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1120, 1121

HEALY, Mr. M., Cork

- Ireland—Questions
 - Board of National Education—Mrs. Harriet Sonter, a Teacher in Belfast, 23, 24
 - Court of Bankruptcy—Accounts of Official Assignees—Mr. L. H. James, 32
 - Land Law Act, 1881—County Court Rules, 580
 - Revision of Parliamentary Voters—Borough of Belfast, 295
- Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 114

HEALY, Mr. T. M., Longford, N.

- Admiralty and War Office, Motion for a Select Committee, 1361
- County Courts (Expenses), Res. 1664
- Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 844
- Ireland Questions
 - Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Acquittals at the Tyrone Winter Assizes, 1745, 1747;—Trial of the Walkers—Challenging the Jury, 1066
 - Customs—Outdoor Officers, 1591
 - Evictions—Mr. Edmond Davoren, Kilmallock, 1720
 - Inflammatory Language—Speech of Lord Rossmore at Camla Orange Hall, Monaghan, 1063
 - Irish Land Question, 1749
 - Law and Justice—Jury Panel of County Monaghan, 1728;—"Queen v. Dillon"—Shorthand Report, 877
 - Prisons Board—Richmond Bridewell, Dublin, 1386
 - Public Meetings, 885
 - Royal Commission on the Land Law Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land Act, 1885, 1273, 1274
 - State of Ireland—Prohibition of Meeting at Coolgreany, 717, 718
- Law of Evidence—Evidence of Accused Persons, 709
- Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, 2R. 1869
- Parliament—Business of the House—Order of Supply, 1361

HEALY, Mr. T. M.—cont.

- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 923, 927, 953, 954, 961, 966, 971, 989, 1011, 1012, 1356, 1357, 1359, 1360, 1563, 1594, 1600, 1623, 1636, 1638, 1647, 1648, 1656, 1660; Motion for Adjournment, 1661, 1663, 1664
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1182, 1183, 1192, 1195, 1196, 1201
- Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 822, 825, 828, 830, 833
- Local Government Board, &c. 806, 810, 816
- Public Buildings (Great Britain), 735
- Science and Art Department, &c. 840, 841
- Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 846; Motion for Adjournment, 849, 851

HEATON, Mr. J. H., Canterbury

- Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1857, 1860, 1866
- Asia (Central)—Russian Railway by the Caspian Sea, 1733
- India—Telegraphic Messages, 582
- Mauritius—Sir George Bowen, 706
- Post Office—Secretary to the Post Office, 1400
- Submarine Cable Company, 707
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Adelaide Exhibition, 1519, 1522
- War Office—Fortification of Singapore—Armament, 882

HENEAGE, Right Hon. E., Great Grimsby

- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1^{1/2} (Closure of Debate), Res. 231, 1305
- Trade and Commerce—Depression in Agriculture, 304

HERSCHELL, Lord

- Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 867
- Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 667
- Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 11, 1714
- Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. cl. 3, 136, 138; Report, 1705
- Potter's Patent, 2R. 558

HILL, Right Hon. Lord A. W. (Comptroller of the Household), Down, W.

- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Her Majesty's Answer to the Address, 485

HILL, Mr. A. S., Staffordshire, King-swinford

- America (South)—British Guiana and Venezuela—The Boundary Line, 1403, 1721
- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 205, 1632, 1633

HOBHOUSE, Lord

- Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 862
- Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881—Agricultural Statistics, 1881-1886, 1256

HOLLAND, Right Hon. Sir H. T. (Secretary of State for the Colonies), *Hampstead*
 Africa—Gold Coast—Contemplated Acquisition of Territory by England, 1081
 Africa (South)—Progress of Affairs—Lord Salisbury's Letter in "The Times," 583
 Zululand, 458
 British Honduras, 718
 Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 554
 Imperial and Colonial Governments—Conference in London, 1738
 Indian Ocean—Seychelles—Mr. Clifford Lloyd, 718
 Islands of the Pacific—Tonga, 169, 485, 876
 Mauritius—Sir George Bowen, 707
 Sir John Pope Hennessy, 1266
 Newfoundland—The Cod Fisheries, 455
 Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 100
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 791

HOLMES, Right Hon. H. (Attorney General for Ireland), *Dublin University*

Ireland—Questions

Court of Bankruptcy—Accounts of Official Assignees—Mr. L. H. James, 33, 1718;
 —Unclaimed Dividends, 1580

Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Action of the Police, 1387;—Trial of the Walkers—Challenging the Jury, 1067

Fisheries—Boat Slip at Fanad Point, Donegal, 1386

Glebe Land Purchasers, 1264

Irish Land Commission—Land Court—Fair Rents, 1382

Labourers' Cottages Act—Co. Limerick, 1577;—Ennis Union, 1384

Land Law, 1881—County Court Rules, 580

Mr. Francis Morrice, Secretary to the Grand Jury, Co. Clare—Fees from Road Contractors, 872

National Schools—Removal of Inspectors, 1390

Poor Law Elections—Returning Officers, Cookhill Union, 1381

Prisons Board—Richmond Bridewell, Dublin, 1385, 1386

Prisons—Salaries of Officials, 1575
 Queen's Plates, 1741

Royal Irish Constabulary—County Inspector Brownrigg, 1388

Subornation of Information—Head Constable Maurice O'Halloran, 1270

Ireland—Evictions—Questions

Carrickmacross Union, 1585

Lord Kingston's Estates, Co. Roscommon, 1389

Mr. Edmond Davoren, Kilmallock, 1720

Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1388, 1389

Ireland—Law and Justice—Questions

Abduction of Ethel Roe, 1577, 1578

Criminal Prosecutions—The Privy Council, 1262

Secretaries of Grand Juries, 467

HOLMES, Right Hon. H.—cont.

Ireland—Law and Justice—Jury System—Questions

Cases of John M'Nulty and others (Plan of Campaign), 1729

Challenges in Criminal Cases—"Queen v. Gartland and M'Kenna," 1394

Monaghan Assizes, 1402, 1727, 1728

"Queen v. Dillon," 475, 1410

Ireland—Magistracy—Questions

Proclamation of Public Meetings, 1259

Supersession of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde,

M.P., High Sheriff of Waterford Co. 1261

The O'Donnellan Blake Forster, J.P. 1393

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 108, 109, 111

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1208, 1209, 1211

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 824, 827, 832

Public Education, Ireland, 1443, 1444, 1445

HOME DEPARTMENT—Secretary of State (*see* MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H.)

HOME DEPARTMENT—Under Secretary of State (*see* WORTLEY, Mr. C. B. STUART-)

HOOPER, Mr. J., Cork, S.E.

Ireland—Questions

Commissioners of Irish Lights—Daunt's Rock, Cork Harbour, 698

Law and Police—Extra Police, Co. Cork, 162, 465

Magistracy—Mr. H. H. Whitney, Kinsale Union, Kerry, 564

Horse Breeding and Supply for Military and Industrial Purposes

Observations, Lord Ribblesdale; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) *Mar* 7, 1363; short debate thereon [See *Army*, 161, 704]

Horses

Prohibition of Export by Foreign Countries, Question, Mr. G. W. Elliot; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb* 22, 303

Prohibition of Export from Great Britain, Question, Colonel Hughes Hallett; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb* 24, 482

Prohibition of Exportation from Germany to England, Question, Mr. Whitmore; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 3, 1078 [See title *Army*]

HOUGHTON, Lord

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R. 858

HOULDSWORTH, Mr. W. H., *Manchester, N. W.*

Education (Science and Art Department)—Regulations as to Drawing, 1584
Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 1581
Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Various Powers), 1716

HOWARD, Mr. J. M., *Camberwell, Dulwich*
Civil Service—Lower Division Clerks and Writers, 470

HOWELL, Mr. G., *Bethnal Green, N. E.*
Law and Justice—Salford Corporation Gas works—"Hunter v. Lever," 169
London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 895, 915, 1089;
Motion for a Select Committee, 1225
Trustee Savings Banks—Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank, 579, 878
Remedies against Trustees, 170

HOWORTH, Mr. H. H., *Salford, S.*
Corporation Officials—Bribery by Commission, 33, 34
Dublin Southern District Tramways (Repayment of Deposit), 1665
Egypt—Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission, 166
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 338, 339

HOYLE, Mr. I., *Lancashire, S. E., Heywood*
India—Army Clothing Department—Exclusion of European Articles, 691, 883, 1738

HUGHES, Colonel E., *Woolwich*
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 1545

HUGHES - HALLETT, Colonel F. C., *Rochester*

Admiralty—Sale of Confidential Drawings in Chatham Dockyard, 1744

Army—Questions

Auxiliary Forces—Militia (Ireland)—Supply of Martini-Henry Rifles, 1072
Medical Staff (India)—Brigade Surgeon William Graves, 1725

Purchase of Horses for Military Service, 704

Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—The Report, 566

Horses—Prohibition of Export from Great Britain, 482

Navy—Intelligence Department—Disclosure of Confidential Documents, 1083

Post Office (India)—Telegraph Department—Presidency Allowance, 36

War Office (Ordnance Department)—Questions
Ammunition, &c.—Boxer Martini-Henry Cartridges, 159, 482, 704;—Solid-drawn Cartridge Cases, 1071

Cartridges in Store, 160

Manufacture of Machine Guns at Enfield, 577

HUNTER, Sir W. G., *Hackney, Central*
Army—Commissions—Standard of Visual Acuteness, 1736
Rank of Medical Officers, 1084

HUNTER, Mr. W. A., *Aberdeen, N.*
Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882 (Dollar Institution), Motion for an Address, 278

Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) Bill

(*Mr. David Plunket, Mr. Jackson*)

c. Read 2^o, and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection Feb 28, 842 [Bill 135]

And, on Mar 7, Committee nominated as follows:—Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. David Plunket

ILLINGWORTH, Mr. A., *Bradford, W.*

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1794, 1795, 1861

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 554

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1550

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 207, 416, 534, 542, 543, 956, 977, 991, 1663

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1186; Motion for reporting Progress, 1187, 1188, 1189

Science and Art Department, &c. 838, 1221

Imperial and Colonial Defences

Singapore, Fortification of—Armament, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 1, 882

Imperial and Colonial Governments—The Conference in London

Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) Mar 10, 1737

Imperial Institute Buildings—The Competition

Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 4, 1273

Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Act (1886) Amendment Bill
[H.L.] (The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos)

l. Presented; read 1^a * Mar 10 (No. 39)

INDIA—Secretary of State (*see* CROSS, Viscount)

INDIA—Under Secretary of State (*see* GORST, Sir J. E.)

INDIA

(Questions)

Collection of Revenue—Magisterial Powers, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 7, 1390*

Pensions for General Services—Amount Paid in England, Question, Mr. King; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 25, 581*

MADRAS

Army Clothing Department—Exclusion of European Articles, Questions, Mr. Hoyle; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 28, 691; Mar 1, 883*

Board of Inland Revenue, Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 28, 697*

Covenanted Civil Service, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 22, 291; —Mr. H. E. Sullivan*, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 7, 1390*

The Collector of Chingleput, Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 28, 695*

POST OFFICE (INDIA)

Telegraph Department—Presidency Allowance, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 18, 36*

Telegraphic Messages, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 25, 582*

RAILWAYS

Extension of the Railway System, Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 25, 568*

Extension of the Railway System in India and Burmah, Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Feb 24, 454*

Bengal - Nagpur Railway, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 4, 1257*

Borrowing Powers—Legislation, Question, Mr. Lionel Cohen; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) *Mar 4, 1272*

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, Posponement of Questions, The Earl of Derby *Feb 18, 7; Question*, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); Question, Mr. Conybeare [no reply] *Feb 18, 45; Question*, Observations, The Earl of Derby, The Earl of Lytton; Reply, The Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross); Observations, The Marquess of Ripon *Feb 22, 280*

Indian Ocean, The—The Seychelles—Mr. Clifford Lloyd

Questions, Mr. Carew, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Feb 28, 718*

Intestates Estates Bill

(Mr. Ambrose,

Mr. Neville, Mr. Joseph Howard, Mr. Addison, Mr. T. P. O'Connor)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Mar 3*

[Bill 187]

IRELAND

(Questions)

Agriculture in Ireland, Royal Commission on—Evictions, Questions, Mr. O'Kelly; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes); Question, Mr. Conybeare [no reply] *Mar 7, 1388*

Asylums (Ireland)—Monaghan Asylum, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 154*

Corrupt Practices at Elections—J. M. Williamson, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 466*

Customs—Outdoor Officers, Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar 8, 1591*

“Death Duties” on Land in Ulster, Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 4, 1267*

Distress, &c.—Distress in Kerry, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Mr. E. Harrington [no reply] *Feb 21, 173*

Gun Licences—Case of James Maye, Ardfinn, Co. Tipperary, Questions, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1073*

Inflammatory Language—Speech of Lord Rossmore at the Camla Orange Hall, Monaghan, Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1063*

Irish Land Question—Legislation, Questions, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 10, 1748*

Letter of Archbishop Croke (Cashel), Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Dr. Commins [no reply] *Feb 28, 695*

Mining Industries, Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 31*

Mortgages and Charges on Landed Property, Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1086*

Port and Docks Board, Dublin—Tenders, Question, Mr. P. McDonald; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Feb 18, 30*

Privy Council (Ireland)—Dates of Meeting, August, 1886, to January, 1887, Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 42*

IRELAND—cont.

Queen's Plates, Question, Colonel Nolan ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 10, 1741*

Revision of Parliamentary Voters—Borough of Belfast, Question, Mr. Maurice Healy ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 295*

Subornation of Information—Head-Constable Maurice O'Halloran, Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 4, 1269*

The Executive—The New Chief Secretary, Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 7, 1409*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)

Cashel Town Commissioners—Audit of Accounts, Question, Mr. Condon ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 157*

The Bankers' Account of the Macroom Board of Guardians—Transfer of Account, Questions, Dr. Tanner ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 28, 719 ; Mar 3, 1077*

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)

Accounts of Official Assignees—Mr. L. H. James, Questions, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. P. McDonald ; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Feb 18, 82 ; Question, Mr. P. McDonald ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 10, 1718*

Unclaimed Dividends, Questions, Mr. P. McDonald ; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 8, 1579*

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS, 1883 AND 1885

Labourers' Cottages, Co. Limerick, Question, Mr. William Abraham (Limerick, W.) ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 8, 1577*

The Ennis Poor Law Union—Scheme under the Acts, Question, Mr. Cox ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 16 ; Question, Mr. Cox ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 7, 1384*

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881

Agricultural Statistics, 1881-1886, Question, Mr. Hobhouse ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) *Mar 4, 1256*

County Court Rules, Question, Mr. Maurice Healy ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Feb 25, 580*

Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, The Royal Commission on the, Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 1, 893 ; Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 4, 1273 ; Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Sexton ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 10, 1748 ;—Report of the Royal Commission*, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 25, 585*

IRELAND—cont.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION

Endowed Schools Commissioners, Questions, Mr. Biggar ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 165*

Land Court, The—Fair Rents—Co. Westmeath, Questions, Mr. D. Sullivan, Mr. Tuitt ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 158 ;—Dilatory Proceedings*, Questions, Dr. Tanner ; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1382*

Lord Annesley's Estate at Belfast, Questions, Mr. McCartan, Mr. Sexton ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 26*

Purchasers of Glebe Lands, Questions, Mr. Reynolds ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 28, 706 ; Mar 1, 859 ; Question, Lord Ernest Hamilton ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 4, 1264*

Sale of Lands in Co. Donegal, Question, Mr. O'Hea ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 471*

Sittings in Clare Co., Question, Mr. Jordan ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 466 ;—At Sligo*, Question, Mr. Sexton ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 173*

COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS

Daunt's Rock, Cork Harbour, Question, Mr. Hooper ; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Feb 28, 698*

EDUCATION (IRELAND)

Commissioners of National Education

Mrs. Harriet Sonter, a Teacher in Belfast, Questions, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Sexton ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 23*

Teachers and the Orange Society, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 23*

Classification of School-Keeping by Teachers, Question, Mr. Leahy ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1065*

Teachers—Mr. James A. Irwin, Carrickavilkin, Co. Armagh, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1069*

National Schools—Removal of Inspectors, Question, Mr. Mac Neill ; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1389*

FISHERIES (IRELAND)

Collection of Statistics, Question, Mr. J. A. Blake ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 565*

IRELAND—Fisheries—cont.

Fishery Weirs—State Weirs on the Lower Shannon, Question, Mr. W. Abraham (Limerick, W.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 28, 699

Inland Fisheries—The River Avoca, Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 18, 18

Salmon Fisheries—Conservators of the Lough Neagh District, Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 18, 15;—*Crown Salmon Fisheries*, Question, Mr. A. L. Brown; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 21, 174

The River Shannon—Fines on a Conservator, Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 21, 163

FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)

Graystones Harbour, Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 28, 697

Belmullet Pier, Questions, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 18, 27; Feb 25, 568

Carrigaholt Pier, Co. Clare, Question, Mr. Jordan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Mar 3, 1074

Boat Slip at Fanad Point, Co. Donegal, Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 7, 1386

INLAND NAVIGATION AND DRAINAGE (IRELAND)

Arterial Drainage—Shannon Drainage and Navigation Works—Lecarrow Harbour, Question, Mr. O'Kelly; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 28, 721

POOR LAW (IRELAND)

Bailieborough Board of Guardians, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 21, 160

Elections—Returning Officers, Cookhill Union, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 7, 1381

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)

Annual Holidays, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 18, 34

Belfast Postmen, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 21, 172

Belfast and Co. Down Railway Company, Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 4, 1268

Contract for conveyance between Mullingar and Ballymahon, Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 10, 1737

IRELAND—Post Office—cont.

Delivery between Drumlish and Fairnaught, Co. Leitrim, Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 4, 1259

English and Irish Officials, Question, Colonel Nolan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 25, 563

Grangeville Post Office, Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 25, 576

Grangeville Letter Carrier, Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 28, 709

Letter Carrier between Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumsna, Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 22, 292

Postal Service in the North of Ireland, Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 1, 887

Post Office at Whitty's Cross, Co. Wexford, Question, Mr. J. E. Redmond; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 3, 1079

Telegraph Department

Telegraphic Communication between Wexford and Enniscorthy, Question, Mr. J. E. Redmond; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 3, 1082

Telegraphic Extension, Co. Donegal, Question, Lord Ernest Hamilton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 4, 1265

RAILWAYS (IRELAND)

Loan to the Sligo, &c. Railway Company, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 22, 293

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)

Abduction of Ethel Roe, Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. H. J. Gill, Mr. McCartan; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 8, 1577

Cases of John McNulty and others (The Plan of Campaign), Question, Mr. Kennedy; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 10, 1728

Criminal Prosecutions—The Privy Council, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) Mar 4, 1262

Criminal Quarter Sessions at Ballyglass, Question, Mr. Byrne; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Mar 1, 877

High Court of Justice—The "Box Fund", Questions, Mr. O'Hea; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Mar 1, 890

Hospital of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum (Ireland)—Occupation by the Police, Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) Feb 21, 167

Mr. Francis Morrice, Secretary to the Grand Jury, Co. Clare—Fees from Road Contractors, Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael

IRELAND—Law and Justice—cont.

Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 294*; Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 1, 872*
Secretaries of Grand Juries, Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Feb 24, 467*
Mr. John Redington, Sub-Sheriff of Co. Galway, Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1060*

The Jury System

Jury Laws, Question, Earl Cadogan; Answer, Lord Fitzgerald *Feb 21, 141*; Question, Observations, Lord Fitzgerald; short debate thereon *Mar 4, 1234*

Juries—Appointment of a Select Committee, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 21, 173*

Challenges in Criminal Cases—"Queen v. Garland and M'Kenna," Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1394*

Monaghan Assizes—The Jury Panel, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes); Question, Dr. Tanner [no reply] *Mar 7, 1401*; Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 10, 127*

Connaught Winter Assizes—Jurors' Acts—The Clerk of the Crown, Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 165*

Clare Assizes, Questions, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Murphy; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 10, 1750*

"*The Queen v. John Dillon and others,*" Question, Mr. W. A. Macdonald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 301*; Questions, Mr. W. A. Macdonald, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Feb 24, 474*; Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 484*;—*The Jurors*, Question, Mr. Chance; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 876*

Safety of the dissenting Jurors, Question, Colonel Sanderson; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1410*

The Shorthand Report, Questions, Mr. Chance, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 1, 877*

PROCLAMATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Questions, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Dr. Tanner, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 884*; Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 4, 1259*

IRELAND—Proclamation of Public Meetings—cont.

Proclamation of Meeting at Coolgreany, Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 305*; *Feb 28, 716*

Proclamation of Meetings in Wicklow and Wexford, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 473*

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)

Duleek Petty Sessions, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 159*

Listowel, Co. Kerry, Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Stack; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 575*

Lurgan Board of Guardians—Hugh Donnelly, of Derrytrasna, Co. Armagh, Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 564*

Appointment of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of the County of Waterford, Postponement of Question, Lord Brabourne, *Feb 21, 132*; Questions, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), 130; Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. P. J. Power; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 481*; Question, The Marquess of Ormonde; Reply, Lord Brabourne, *Mar 3, 1023*;—*Supersession of*, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 4, 1261*

Notices issued by the Deputy Sheriff, Co. Waterford, Questions, Mr. P. J. Power; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1081*

The O'Donnellan Blake Forster, J.P., Question, Colonel Sanderson; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1393*

Speech of Major George Johnston, J.P., at Glenties, Co. Donegal, Questions, Captain M'Calmont, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 28, 702*

Mr. H. H. Whitney, Kinsale Union, Kerry, Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 564*

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)

Durrus Petty Sessions — Hegarty Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 153*

Extra Police, Co. Cork, Questions, Mr. Hooper; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 162* *Feb 24, 465*

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY

Allowances for Horses, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 28*

IRELAND—*The Royal Irish Constabulary*—cont.

County Inspector Brownrigg, Questions, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 1880*; Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1887*

Evictions at Ventry—Alleged Violence, Question, Mr. Conynbear; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 176*

PRISONS BOARD (IRELAND)

Richmond Prison, Dublin, Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 176*; Questions, Mr. Conway, Mr. H. J. Gill, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1885*

Prison Service—The "Intern Officers," Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 891*

Salaries of Officials, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 1575*

STATE OF IRELAND

Procession of Orange Bands—Ballymoney, Questions, Mr. Pinkerton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 30*

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)

"Boycotting" Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Castlewellan, Co. Down, Questions, Colonel Waring, Mr. M'Cartan; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 873*

Co. Clare, Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Cox; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 473*

Dynamite Outrage at Residence of Mr. T. Rice Henn, Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 1, 873*

Murder at Ballycar, Co. Clare, Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 292*

Murder of ——— Murphy, near Killarney, Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 22, 302*

Samuel Downing, Co. Kerry, Question, Mr. Sheehan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 28, 714*

The Riots at Belfast

Extra Pay to the Military, Questions, Mr. Lafone, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Feb 18, 41*

Compensation to the Local Police, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 24, 462*

Report of Mr. Wallace MacHardy, Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. John Morley; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 172*

IRELAND—*Crime and Outrage—The Belfast Riots*—cont.

Report of the Commissioners, Question, The Earl of Kimberley; Answer, The Lord Privy Seal (Earl Cadogan) *Mar 7, 1862*

The Trial of the Walkers—Challenging the Jury, Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 3, 1066*

Action of the Police, Questions, Mr. Blane; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1386*

Acquittals at the Tyrone Winter Assizes, Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 10, 1745*

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)

Banbridge Board of Guardians, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 28, 720*

Carriackmacross Union, Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 8, 1585*

Westport Union, Co. Mayo, Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 168*

The Return, Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Mr. Sexton [No reply] *Feb 18, 31*

Case of James Clery, Ardmoyle, Cashel—Conduct of an Emergency Man, Question, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1073*

Eviction of Mrs. Conlon, Co. Roscommon, Questions, Mr. Cox; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 21, 155*

Mr. Edmond Daroven, Kilmallock, Questions, Mr. Finucane, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 10, 1719*

Thomas Walsh, Ballydaff, Co. Mayo, Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 567*

The Brooke Estate, Coolgreany, Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar 3, 1080*

Lord Kingston's Estates, Co. Roscommon, Question, Mr. O'Kelly; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar 7, 1389*

Knockmoyleen, Ballyeroy, Co. Mayo, Question, Mr. Conynbear; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 25, 574*

Evictions in Leitrim, Questions, Mr. Conway, Sir John Swinburne; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); Question, Dr. Tanner [No reply] *Feb 28, 711*

ISAACSON, Mr. F. Wootton, *Tower Hamlets, Stepney*
Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1888, 1841

JACKSON, Mr. W. L. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Leeds, N.*

Civil Service—Lower Division Clerks and Writers, 470

Civil Service Estimates—Fees to Law Officers of the Crown, 1735

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 556

County Court (Expenses), 2R. 845; Res. reported, 1664

Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment, 2R. 127

Foynes Harbour (Transfer), 2R. 551, 552

Inland Revenue—Experiment in Tobacco Cultivation, 481

Ireland—Questions

Customs—Outdoor Officers, 1591

Drainage and Navigation—Shannon Works—Lecarrow Harbour, 721

Fisheries—Crown Salmon Fisheries, 175

Fishery Piers and Harbours—Carrigaholt Pier, Co. Clare, 1075;—Greystones Harbour, 697

High Court of Justice—"Box Fund," 890, 891

Piers and Harbours—Belmullet Pier, 27, 563

Railways—Loan to the Sligo, &c. Railway Company, 293

Literature, Art, and Science—The Challoner-Smith Collection of Mezzotint Engravings, 1080, 1739

Post Office Mail Contract (Highland Fisheries Company, Limited), Res. 388

Public Service—Retired Pay or Pensions—The Return, 1589

Royal Commission on Depression of Trade and Agriculture—The Report, 44

Scotland—Intestates, 692

Sasine Office, Edinburgh—Revenue and Ex-

penditure, 703;—Sale of Stamps, 288

Searches of Incumbrances, 1717

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Adelaide Exhibition, 1519

Admiralty and War Office, The New, 743, 744, 750, 751, 752

Civil Service Commission, 779, 782, 783, 797

Colonies, Grants in Aid, 1516

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 821, 822, 828, 830, 831

Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 757, 763, 766

Houses of Parliament, 726

Public Buildings, Great Britain, 732, 735, 737

Superannuations and Retired Allowances, 1518, 1519

"Telegrafo" Claims, 1528

Treasury Chest Robbery, 1529, 1530

Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1506, 1513

JAMES, Hon. W. H., *Gateshead*

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, Motion for Adjournment, 152, 442, 451, 452

Education (Science and Art Department)—Elementary Scholarships, 465

Egypt—Right of Commercial Convention with Foreign Powers, 35

Islands of the Pacific—Disturbances at Tonga, 168, 484, 875

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 992, 1605

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1419

JENNINGS, Mr. L. J., *Stockport*

Prison Sites—Housing of the Working Classes—Coldbath Fields Prison, 458

JOHNSTON, Mr. W., *Belfast, S.*

Army—Examinations for Commissions—The English Language, 156

Civil Service Writers—Departmental Committee, 1579

Ireland—Law and Justice—Abduction of Ethel Roe, 1577, 1578

Letter of the Archbishop of Cashel, 695

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1547

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), 1274

Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Special Service in Westminster Abbey, 722

JORDAN, Mr. J., *Clare, W.*

Ireland—Fishery Piers and Harbours—Carrigaholt Pier, Co. Clare, 1074

Irish Land Commission—Sittings in Clare Co. 466

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1133, 1144

Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1514

Jurors' Detention Bill

(*Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Finlay, Mr. Baggallay*)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * Mar 2 [Bill 186]

Justices' Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.]

(*The Lord Bramwell*) (No. 24)

l. Read 2^a, after short debate Feb 24, 434

KELLY, Mr. J. Richards, *Camberwell, N.*
Sutton District Water, Res. 12

KENNAWAY, Sir J. H., *Devon, Honiton*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1304

KENNEDY, Mr. E. J., *Sligo, S.*

Ireland—Law and Justice—Cases of John M'Nulty and others—"The Plan of Campaign," 1728

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1154, 1155

KENNY, Mr. C. S., *York, W.R., Barnsley*
Newfoundland—The Cod Fisheries, 455

KENNY, Mr. M. J., *Tyrone, Mid*
Foynes Harbour (Transfer), 2R. 551
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 356, 500, 518, 601, 603, 617, 645, 650, 921, 933, 939, 1004, 1317, 1320, 1324, 1608, 1690
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 748
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1217
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 759, 765
Local Government Board, &c. 813
Public Buildings, Great Britain, 733
Science and Art Department, &c. 837

KENYON, Hon. G. T., *Denbigh, &c.*
Ecclesiastical Commissioners] (Income and Expenditure in Wales), Motion for a Paper, 556, 557
Education Department—Forthcoming Code—Articles 114, 109, 1736
Mines Regulation—Accident at the Rhondda Colliery, 477

KIMBER, Mr. H., *Wandsworth*
Watch Trade—Hall-Marking of Watch Cases—Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 722; —Waltham Watch Manufacturing Company, 1262

KIMBERLEY, Earl of
Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 863
Crime and Outrage (Ireland)—Riots at Belfast—Report of the Commissioners, 1362
Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 666
Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 3, 1710

KING, Mr. H. S., *Hull, Central*
India — Pensions for General Services — Amount paid in England, 581
Post Office—Postage to India and China through Belgium, 291, 710

KING-HARMAN, Colonel E. R., *Kent, Isle of Thanet*
Ireland — Law and Justice—Jury System — Clare Assizes, 1750
Metropolis — Street Improvements — Charing Cross Road—National Gallery, 1068
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1119, 1120

KNIGHTLEY, Sir R., *Northamptonshire, S.*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 412

KNOWLES, Mr. L., *Salford, W.*
Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 444

LABOUCHERE, Mr. H., *Northampton*
Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, Amendt. 146, 147
Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1770, 1775; Amendt. 1849
Bulgaria, Affairs of—Mr. Condie Stephen, 479
The Debate, 181
Exhibition of 1851—Landed Property held by the Commissioners—Amount Mortgaged to Greenwich Hospital, 1586
London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 905, 907, 909
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 405, 645, 946, 975, 1321, 1322; Motion for Adjournment, 1359, 1644, 1661
Parliament—Privilege — Premature Publication of the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 130
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, Amendt. 48, 66, 68
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Army and Navy Estimates, 1592
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 742
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1183
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. Amendt. 752, 755, 764
Embassies and Missions Abroad, Amendt. 1458, 1461, 1481, 1482
Local Government Board, &c. 816
Science and Art Department, &c. 1221
Superannuations and Retired Allowances, 1617, 1518

LAFONE, Mr. A., *Southwark, Bermondsey*
Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Extra Pay to the Military, 41
Trade and Manufacture—French Prohibition of English Leather, 1395.

LAMBERT, Mr. Cowley, *Islington, E.*
Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Marching Allowances to Volunteers, 28

LANE, Mr. W. J., *Cork Co., E.*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 376, 379, 1604, 1678, 1679
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 773, 775

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) (Questions)

High Court of Justice—Chancery Division—Distribution of Business, Question, Mr. F. W. Maclean; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) Feb 18, 25

Scotch Cases—"Jones v. Scottish Accident Insurance Company," Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) Mar 8, 1574

Law of Evidence—Evidence of Accused Persons, Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy [no reply] Feb 28, 709

LAW AND JUSTICE (*England and Wales*)—cont.

Prison Service (England), Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 21, 161*

Salford Corporation Gas Works—"Hunter v. Lever," Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 21, 169*

THE MAGISTRACY

Coleford—Sentence on an Old Man, Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18, 37*

Mr. George Fyddell Rowley, High Sheriff of Rutlandshire, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 4, 1270*

The Magistracy of Flintshire, Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 10, 1740*

LAW AND POLICE (*Questions*)

The Recent Socialist Demonstrations (Metropolis), Aug. 29, Question, Mr. Fisher; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 3, 1069*

Reformatory School for Girls, Hampstead Heath, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 25, 571*

Law of Evidence Amendment Bill [H.L.: (*The Lord Bramwell*)

l. Read 2^a, after short debate *Feb 24, 430*
Committee; Report *Mar 3, 1024* (No. 23)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a" *Mar 4, 1254*

Amendt. to leave out ("now") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Denman*); on Question, that ("now") &c., resolved in the affirmative; Bill read 3^a

Protest, Lord Denman, 1255

LAWSON, Sir W., *Cumberland, Cocker-mouth*

Parliament — Privilege — Imputation upon Members of this House, 286

LAWSON, Mr. H. L. W., *St. Pancras, W.*

Collection of Tithes—Biddenden, Kent, 17
First Offenders, 2R. 122

Inland Revenue—Income Tax—Assessment on Public Baths and Wash-houses, St. Pancras, 297

Law and Police—Reformatory School for Girls, Hampstead Heath, 571

Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869—Licences, 567

Weights and Measures Act, 1878—"Further Legislation," 25

LEAHY, Mr. J., *Kildare, S.*

Ireland—Commissioners of National Education—Classification of School-keeping by Teachers, 1065

LEAKE, Mr. R., *Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Amendt. 931; Amendt. 993

LEES, Mr. E., *Oldham*

Limited Liability Companies, 888
Merchandise Marks Act Consolidation, 1260

LEFEVRE, Right Hon. G. J. Shaw, *Bradford, Central*

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 443

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1858

London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill—Extension of the Impost to the Metropolitan Area, 1076

Parliament—Public Business—Committee of Supply, 584

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 598, 1673

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 749
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 761
Post Office, 1542
Post Office Telegraphs, 1543
Treasury Chest Robbery, 1631

Licences (Belfast) Bill (*Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Peter M'Donald, Mr. Reynolds*)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Feb 28* [Bill 183]

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (*Scotland*) Bill (*Dr. Cameron, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. Mark Stewart, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Lyell, Mr. Provand*)

c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^o" *Mar 7, 1544*; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Colonel Hughes*); after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Original Question again proposed, 1546; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Viscount Cranborne*); after further short debate, Question put; A. 112, N. 100; M. 12 (D. L. 46); Debate adjourned [Bill 183]

LICHFIELD, Bishop of

Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 3, Amendt. 1706; cl. 5, Amendt. 1710; cl. 11, Amendt. 1712, 1714

Lichfield Charities—Lowe's Charity

Question, Sir John Swinburne; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 3, 1088*

[See title *Charity Commissioners*]

Limited Liability Companies—Legislation

Question, Mr. Lees; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Mar 1, 888*

LINGEN, Lord

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R.

858

Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 9, 1712

Literature, Science, and Art

National Science Collections—The Inter-Departmental Committee, Question, Sir Henry Roscoe; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 7, 1896*

The Challoner-Smith Collection of Mezzotint Engravings, Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar 3, 1080*; Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar 10, 1739*

The Patent Museum, Question, Mr. J. Chamberlain; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *Mar 10, 1722*

The Schools at South Kensington—Surplus of Exhibition of 1851, Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 10, 1745*

LLEWELLYN, Mr. E. H., Somerset, N.

Poor Law—Law of Settlement and Removal, 1261

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—President
(*see* RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T.)**Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (Carrick-on-Suir) Bill [H.L.]**
(*The Lord Privy Seal*)

1. Presented; read 1* *Feb 24* (No. 30)
Read 2* *Mar 7*

LOCKWOOD, Mr. F., York

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 745

LONDON, Bishop of

Church Patronage, 2R. 1027

London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill

c. Question, Mr. Dixon Hartland; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *Mar 8, 1575*

Extension of the Impost to the Metropolitan Area, Questions, Mr. Lionel Cohen, Mr. Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Sir Charles Palmer; Answers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *Mar 3, 1075*

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation)

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Mr. Howell*) *Mar 1, 895*; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Questions, Mr. Howell, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 3, 1089*; Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 9, 1665*

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation) —cont.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon certain charges, brought under the notice of this House by Mr. Howell, Member for the North East Division of Bethnal Green, and Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for the Borough of Northampton, alleging improper use and malversation of public funds of the Corporation of London, by or with the consent of members and officials of such Corporation" (*Mr. Howell*) *Mar 3, 1224*; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they do take evidence on oath

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records (*Mr. Howell*)

Ordered, That the Select Committee do consist of Five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection

Ordered, That Two Members of the House, to be named by the Committee of Selection, be appointed to propose and examine witnesses, but without the power of voting (*Mr. Bradlaugh*) *Mar 10*

LORD ADVOCATE, The (*see* MACDONALD, Right Hon. J. H. A.)**LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND — Chief Secretary to the** (*see* BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-)**LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., Cumberland, Penrith**

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 146, 150

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Service, 1864

LUBBOCK, Sir J., London University

Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, 2R. 1863

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1438

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]

(The Lord Chancellor)

1. Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill" *Feb 21, 132*

Amendt. "That the numbering of the clauses throughout the Bill be amended, so that every clause (whether now numbered as a section or a sub-section) be numbered as successive sections of 'substantive enactments' (except those now indicated by letters prefixed, and which are parts of one sentence), and that all references in the Bill be altered accordingly" (*The Lord Grimthorpe*); after short debate, Amendt. negatived; Committee (No. 7)

Committee *Mar 1, 869*

Report *Mar 10, 1705*

(No. 34)

Lunacy Laws

Detention of an Alleged Lunatic in Paddington Workhouse, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) Feb 18, 36; Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) Feb 23, 710; Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) Mar 10, 1734

Lunacy Laws Consolidation Bill—Incorporation of "The Idiots' Act, 1886"

c. Question, Mr. Salt; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 3, 1087

LYMINGTON, Right Hon. Viscount, Devon, South Molton

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1662

LYTTON, Earl of

India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 282

McCALMONT, Captain J., Antrim, E.

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—The Murder at Ballycar, Co. Clare, 292

Magistracy—Speech of Major George Johnston, J.P., at Glenties, Co. Donegal, 702

McCARTAN, Mr. M., Down, S.

Admiralty—Guardship "Ajax" at Gun Practice, 569

Regulations—Support and Education of Catholic Orphans, 456

Civil Service Writers—The Departmental Committee, 1578

Ireland—Questions

Crime and Outrage—Boycotting Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Castlewellan, Co. Down, 873;—Riots at Belfast—Compensation to the Local Police, 462

Evictions—Banbridge Board of Guardians, 720

Irish Land Commission—Lord Annesley's Estate at Belfast, 26, 27

Law and Justice—Abduction of Ethel Roe, 1578

Post Office—Belfast and Co. Down Railway Company, 1268;—Postal Service in the North of Ireland, 887

Prisons—Salaries of Officials, 1575

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 764

MACDONALD, Right Hon. J. H. A. (Lord Advocate), Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2), 2R. 1021

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1546

MACDONALD, Right Hon. J. H. A.—cont.

Scotland—Questions

Criminal Law—Private Prosecutions, 692

Education Department—Cambusnethan Public School, 562

Fisheries—Trawling at Ballantrae, Ayrshire, 1580

Law and Justice—Trial of Peter White and others Charged with Mobbing and Rioting at Motherwell, 1060

Salmon Fisheries, 1405

Skye Crofters—Withdrawal of Police, 705

McDONALD, Mr. P., Sligo, N.

Admiralty—The Guardship "Belleisle"—Repairs, 170

The "Broad Arrow" and Military Magazine, 1087

Ireland—Court of Bankruptcy—Accounts of Official Assignees—Mr. L. H. James, 33, 1718;—Unclaimed Dividends, 1579

Inland Revenue—Custom House, Dublin, 169

Port and Docks Board, Dublin—Tenders, 30

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 107

Parliamentary Franchise—Revision of the Parliamentary Voters' List, 30

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 771, 772

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 821, 822, 824

Local Government Board, &c. 807, 817

Public Education (Ireland), 1450, 1452

Science and Art Department, 1439

McDONALD, Dr. R., Ross and Cromarty

Admiralty—"Greenwich Sixpences' Fund," 41

MACDONALD, Mr. W. A., Queen's Co., Ossory

Ireland—Law and Justice—Jury System—"Queen v. Dillon and others," 301, 474, 475

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 421, 424, 641

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1115

McEWAN, Mr. W., Edinburgh, Central

Saline Office, Edinburgh—Sale of Stamps, 288

McGAREL-HOGG, Sir J. M. (Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works), Middlesex, Hornsey

London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill—Extension of the Impost to the Metropolitan Area, 1076, 1576

Metropolitan Board of Works—Condemned Buildings in Whitechapel, 1590

Metropolitan Management Act, 1878—Form of Certificate, 296, 297

MACKINTOSH, Mr. C. FRASER-, *Inverness-shire*

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, Motion for an Address, 852, 853
 Post Office—Mail Service to the Island of Harris, 703
 Scotland—Law and Justice—The Canteen Committee of Fort George, Inverness, 476
 Sasine Office, Edinburgh—Revenue and Expenditure, 703

McLAGAN, Mr. P., *Linlithgow*

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1548

McLAREN, Mr. W. S. B., *Cheshire, Crewe*

Dogs—Liability for shooting Stray Dogs, 1260
 Parliamentary Registration Act, 1878—Case of Henry Holder, Registration Agent at Stafford, 156
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1203

MACLEAN, Mr. F. W., *Oxford, Woodstock*

High Court of Justice—Chancery Division—Distribution of Business, 25

MACLURE, Mr. J. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Stretford*

Harbours, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act, 1847—Harbours Exempt—Life-Saving Apparatus, 288
 India—Extension of the Railway System in India and Burmah, 454
 Merchant Shipping—Questions
 Assistance to Vessels near Milford Haven, 289
 Loss of the "Caterina," 290
 Steam Tug off Mumbles Head, 1576
 Wrecks and Loss of Life in the Bristol Channel, 289

MAC NEILL, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*

Ireland—National Schools—Removal of Inspectors, 1389
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 524, 525, 526, 641, 952, 964, 1007

MAHONY, Mr. P., *Meath, N.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 501, 631

MAKINS, Colonel W. T., *Essex, S.E.*

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 144

MALCOLM, Colonel J. W., *Argyllshire*

Clyde Navigation, Consid. Amendt. 1381, 1552
 Navy—H.M.S. "Ajax"—Gun Practice at Inellan, on the Clyde, 179
 Scotland—Harbours, &c.—Gigulund Sound, 294

Malta

Moved for, "Address for Papers on the Affairs of Malta, especially those relating to the Government of Malta" (*The Earl De La Warr*) Mar 4, 1227; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

MANNERS, Right Hon. Lord J. J. R. (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), *Leicestershire, E.*

Agricultural Statistics—Unoccupied Farms, 25
 Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Outbreak of Anthrax in Essex, 566
 Duchy of Lancaster—Leases of Land in Yorkshire, 1727
 Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881—Agricultural Statistics, 1881-1886, 1256
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 549, 947, 1290, 1291, 1652, 1703
 Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 85, 86

MAPPIN, Sir F. T., *York, W.R., Hal-lamshire*

Public Health Act, 1875—Assessment of Allotment Gardens, 1726

MARJORIBANKS, Right Hon. E., *Berwickshire*

British Honduras, 718
 Harbour Accommodation Committee, 892

MARLBOROUGH, Duke of

Currency, Gold and Silver (Royal Commission), 671

MASON, Mr. S., *Lanark, Mid*

Army and Navy Estimates—Reference to a Select Committee, 723
 Income Tax—Foreign Companies Trading in England, 47
 Scotland—Education Department—Cambusnethan Public School, 562

MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, E.*

Adulteration Acts—Licensed Victuallers—Westminster, 1574
 Burials—Questions
 Attleborough New Cemetery, 40
 Disturbance at Stratford Cemetery—White-chapel, 892
 Removal of the Dead from Churchyards and Burial Grounds, 21, 23
 Coal Mines—Explosion at Cwctch Rhondda, South Wales, 181, 477
 Collection of Tithes—Biddenden, Kent, 18
 Coroners' Inquests—View of the Bodies, 579
 Corporation Officials—Bribery by Commissions, 33
 Dogs—Liability for shooting Stray Dogs, 1260
 Elementary Education—Irregular Attendance—Mr. Paget, Wandsworth Police Court, 29
 Evictions at Burradon Colliery, Northumberland, 579
 First Offenders, 2R. 116

MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H.—*cont.*

Game Laws—Sale of a Hare without a Licence, 1743

Law and Justice—Prison Service (England), 161
Salford Corporation Works—"Hunter v. Jevir," 169

Law and Police—Reformatory School for Girls, Hampstead Heath, 571

Magistracy (England and Wales)—Coleford—Sentence on an Old Man, 37

Magistracy of Flintshire, 1740

Metropolis—Questions

Metropolitan Police—Inspectors of the Criminal Investigation Department, 17;
—Wandsworth Police Court, 159

Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869—Licences, 568

Recent Socialist Demonstrations, 1070;—Church Parade at St. Paul's Cathedral, 725

Mines (Scotland)—Assistant Inspectorship of Mines in Western Division, 39

Parliament—Business of the House—Coal Mines Regulation Bill, 1740

Parliamentary Registration Act, 1878—Case of Henry Holder, Registration Agent at Stafford, 157

Police and Constabulary Forces in Great Britain—Superannuation, 34

Police Clothing—The System of Contracts, 1071

Prison Sites—Housing of the Working Classes—Coldbath Fields Prison, 458

Royal Commission on Public Departments—Compulsory Retirements, 1582

Vaccination Acts—Case of James Bamford, 1573

Mr. R. King, Evington, 1394

Mauritius

Sir George Bowen, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) Feb 28, 706

Sir John Pope Hennessy, Questions, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) Mar 4, 1266

MAXWELL, Sir H. E. (A Lord of the Treasury), Wigton

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 552
Queen's Plates, 581

MAYNE, Admiral R. C., *Pembroke and Haverfordwest*

Borneo—The Limbang River, 699

Navy—Pembroke Dockyard—Defective Sheers, 702, 1066

MENZIES, Mr. R. S., *Perthshire, E.*

Royal Commission on Public Departments—Compulsory Retirements, 1582

Merchandise (Fraudulent Marks) Bill

(Mr. Mundella, Mr. Acland, Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Bernard Coleridge, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Henry Wilson)

c. Ordered; read 1° * Feb 22 [Bill 179]

Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill

c. Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 8, 1581

Hall-Marking of Watch Cases, Question, Mr. Wiggan; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 3, 1078

Merchandise Marks Acts—Consolidation

Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Lees; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 4, 1259

Merchant Shipping

Assistance to Vessels near Milford Haven, Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) Feb 22, 289

Shipwrecks on the Glamorganshire Coast—Coastguard Station at Southerndown, Question, Mr. A. J. Williams; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 3, 1062

Steam Tug off Mumbles Head, Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 8, 1576

Wrecks and Loss of Life in the Bristol Channel, Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 22, 289

Boat Accommodation on Passenger Ships, Question, Captain Price; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 1, 876

Licences for Foreign Pilots, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 4, 1268

Loss of the "Caterina," Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 22, 290

Transfer of British Ships to Foreign Owners, Question, Mr. T. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 7, 1392

Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill

(Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, Mr. Bond)

c. Ordered; read 1° * Feb 28 [Bill 184]
Read 2° Mar 9

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Various Powers) Bill

c. Postponement of Motion, Mr. Houldsworth Mar 10, 1716

METROPOLIS

(Questions)

Church Parade of Socialists at St. Paul's Cathedral, Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 28*, 725

Foreign Labour in East London, Questions, Captain Colomb; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Mar 10*, 1724

Police—Wandsworth Police Court, Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 21*, 159

Metropolitan Improvements

New Line of St. Martin's Place, Question, Mr. Whitmore; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Feb 24*, 462

Charing Cross Road, Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 1*, 893

The National Gallery, Questions, Major Rasch, Sir Richard Paget, Colonel Kingharman; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar 3*, 1067

Water Supply—Chelsea Water Company, Question, Colonel Dawnay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 1*, 881

The Parks

Battersea Park, Question, Mr. Baggallay; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Feb 28*, 700; Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar 7*, 1302

Regent's Park, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar 7*, 1405

Victoria Park, Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Feb 24*, 478

Metropolis Management Act, 1878—Form of Certificate

Questions, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *Feb 22*, 295

Metropolitan Board of Works—Condemned Buildings in Whitechapel

Question, Lord Henry Bruce; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *Mar 8*, 1590

Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881)

Extension Bill

(Sir John Lubbock,

Mr. Dalrymple, Sir Charles Forster, Mr. Howdsworth, Mr. Reid, Sir Albert Rollet, Mr. Salt) [Bill 171]

c. Read 2^o, after short debate *Mar 10*, 1868

Metropolitan Police—Inspectors of the Criminal Investigation Department

Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 18*, 17
[See title *Police*]

Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869—Licences

Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 25*, 567

MILDMAY, Mr. F. B., Devon, Totnes
Queen's Plates, 580

MILLTOWN, Earl of

Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 432; Comm. cl. 2, Amendt. 1024, 1025; cl. 5, Amendt. *ib.*

Miners' Wages Payment Bill [Bill 140]

(Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Mason, Mr. Borlase, Mr. Clancy)

c. Read 2^o,* and referred to Select Comm. Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment Bill

Mines Regulation—The Accident at the Rhondda Colliery

Questions, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. W. Abraham (Glamorgan, Rhondda); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 24*, 477

Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) Bill

(Mr. Acland, Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne)

c. Read 2^o* *Mar 9*

[Bill 146]

MOLLOY, Mr. B. C., King's Co., Birr

Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1864

First Offenders, 2R. 120

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 334, 501, 505, 509, 587, 588, 615, 640, 649; Amendt. 928, 935, 941, 942, 1001, 1306, 1358, 1624, 1625, 1687

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 788

Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1461

Public Education, Ireland, 1413, 1444, 1445

Sutton District Water, Res. 9

MONKSWELL, Lord

Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. cl. 6, Amendt. 139; cl. 33, Amendt. *ib.*; add. cl. 141

MONTAGU, Mr. S., Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel

Currency—Deterioration of the Gold Coinage, 468

MONTAGU, Mr. S.—*cont.*

Post Office (England and Wales)—The Pattern Post, 162
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Buildings, Great Britain, 731

MORGAN, Right Hon. G. Osborne, *Denbighshire, E.*

Islands of the Pacific—The New Hebrides—Fortifications of the French, 298
Mauritius—Sir John Pope Hennessy, 1266
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 335, 600, 603, 991, 1674

MORGAN, Mr. O. V., *Battersea*

Africa (South)—Progress of Affairs—Lord Salisbury's Letter in "The Times," 583
Imperial and Colonial Governments—Conference in London, 1737
London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 915
Parks (Metropolis)—Battersea Park, 1392
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 96
Police (Metropolis)—Wandsworth Police Court, 159

MORLEY, Right Hon. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—The Riots at Belfast—Report of Mr. Wallace MacHardy, 172
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1644

MOUNT-EDGUMBE, Earl of (Lord Steward of the Household)

Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment, Comm. 1715

MOWBRAY, Right Hon. Sir J. R., *Oxford University*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 313, 317

MOWBRAY, Mr. R. G. C., *Lancashire, Prestwich*

Royal Commission on Trade and Agriculture—The Report, 44

Mozambique—*Protection of British Subjects—H.M.S. "Reindeer"*

Question, Mr. A. E. Pease; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Mar 10, 1741

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*

Army Manufacturing Department—Manufacture of Steel at Woolwich, 178, 708
Steel for Projectiles at Royal Laboratory, 1583

Education—Elementary Education—Irregular Attendance—Mr. Paget, Wandsworth Police Court, 29

Local Colleges in England and Wales, 1383

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J.—*cont.*

Parliament—Privilege—Alleged Premature Disclosure of a Paper, Personal Explanation, 181, 184, 185

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1430

Municipal Corporations Acts (Ireland) Amendment Bill (*Sir James Corry, Mr. Ewart, Mr. Johnston*)

c. Bill withdrawn * Feb 21 [Bill 73]

Municipal Corporations Acts (Ireland) Amendment (No. 2) Bill (*Sir James Corry, Mr. Ewart, Mr. Johnston*)

c. Read 1st * Feb 22 [Bill 176]

MURPHY, Mr. W. M., *Dublin, St. Patrick's*
Ireland—Law and Justice—Jury System—Clare Assizes, 1751

National Provident Insurance

Select Committee nominated Mar 1; List of the Committee, 979

NAVY (*Questions*)

Admiralty Regulations—Support and Education of Catholic Orphans, Question, Mr. M^cCartan; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) Feb 24, 456

Coaling Stations—The Seychelles, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Feb 28, 714

Contract System of the Admiralty—The Royal Commission—Report, Question, Mr. R. W. Duff; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Feb 21, 180;—*Irregular Publication of Evidence*, Question, Mr. Byron Reed; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) Mar 8, 1587

Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets—H.M.S. "Acorn," Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 4, 1266 [See Army]

"Greenwich Sixpences' Fund," Question, Dr. R. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (A Lord of the Admiralty) Feb 18, 41

Health of the Navy, 1885—Insanitary Condition of Water Tanks at Malta, Question, Mr. Norton; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) Mar 1, 875

Intelligence Department—Disclosure of Confidential Documents, Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Childers; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 3, 1083

Manufacturing Department—Nordenfellt Guns, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 7, 1391

Naval Guns and Ammunition—Papers and Correspondence, Question, Sir William Plowden; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) Mar 7, 1407

Naval Lieutenants—Resignation of Commissions in time of Peace, Question, General

NAVY—*cont.*

Fraser; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 3, 1065*

Naval Operations in New Guinea, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 18, 34*

H.M.S. "Ajax"—Gun Practice at Innellan, on the Clyde, Question, Colonel Malcolm; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 21, 179*; Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 25, 569*

The Guardship "Belleisle"—Repairs, Question, Mr. P. McDonald; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 21, 170*; —*Absence from Kingstown Harbour*, Question, Mr. P. McDonald; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 3, 1087*; Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 10, 1739*

H.M.S. "Falcon"—Prize Money, Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, Lord Charles Beresford (A Lord of the Admiralty) *Feb 24, 460*

Stranding of the Gunboat "Firm"—Sir William Thomson's Deep Sea Sounding Machine, Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 25, 576*

The Dockyards

Dockyard Subscriptions to the Imperial Institute, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 21, 175*; Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 7, 1408*

Chatham Dockyard—Sale of Confidential Drawings, &c.—Mr. Young Terry, Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 10, 1744*

Devonport Dockyard—The Fire Brigade Staff, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 7, 1391*

Pembroke Dockyard—Defective Sheers, Questions, Admiral Mayne; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Feb 28, 702*; *Mar 3, 1066*

Portsmouth Dockyard, Fatal Accident at, Question, Sir William Crossman; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 3, 1078*

Newfoundland—The Cod Fisheries

Question, Mr. Courtney Kenny; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Feb 24, 455*

NOLAN, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1813, 1825, 1826, 1828, 1830, 1832, 1834, 1836, 1840, 1854

NOLAN, Colonel J. P.—*cont.*

Ireland—Post Office—English and Irish Officials, 563

Queen's Plates, 581, 1741

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Amendt. 486, 626, 629, 631, 634, 645, 937, 965, 966, 967, 976, 1629, 1632, 1684, 1704

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 823; Motion for reporting Progress, 832

Local Government Board, &c. 804, 805, 807, 811

Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1505

NOLAN, Mr. J., *Louth, N.*

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1828

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 533

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 112

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Education (Ireland), 1455

NORRIS, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*

Pacific Ports—Ill-Usage of British Seamen, 41, 300

Trade and Commerce—International Conference on the Sugar Bounties, 1589

North American Fisheries, The—Canada and the United States—The Fishery Disputes

Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 22, 291*; Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Feb 28, 713*

NORTHCOOTE, Hon. H. S. (Surveyor General of Ordnance), *Exeter*

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1823, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1829, 1839, 1851

War Office (Ordnance Department)—Questions Ammunition, &c.—Solid-Drawn Cartridge Cases, 1071

Boxer Martini-Henry Cartridges at Woolwich, 160, 482, 704

Cartridges in Store, 160

Contract for Cartridges for Queensland, 1583

Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets, 480

Deficiencies in Naval Guns and Ammunition, 883

Inspector of Saddlery at Woolwich, 1399

Manufacture of Machine Guns at Enfield, 577

North Sea Fisheries Convention—Damages by Belgian Owners

Question, Sir Savile Crossley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 1, 1886*

North Sea Fisheries—The Fishing Boat "Skylark"

Question, Sir Savile Crossley; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar 1, 1886*

North Sea Liquor Traffic—The International Conference

Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 10, 1886*

NORTON, Mr. R., Kent, Tunbridge

Health of the Navy, 1885—Insanitary Condition of Water Tanks at Malta, 875

O'BRIEN, Mr. J. F. X., Mayo, S.

Ireland—Questions

Evictions—Thomas Walshe, Ballydaffe, Co. Mayo, 567;—Westport Union, Co. Mayo, 163

Fishery Piers—Belmullet Pier, 27;—Tolls on, 563

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 520, 1009, 1010, 1680

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 826, 831

O'BRIEN, Mr. P., Monaghan, N.

Admiralty—Sale of Confidential Drawings, &c. in Chatham Dockyard, 1744

India—Questions

Collection of Revenue—Magisterial Powers, 1390

Madras Covenanted Civil Service, 291, 1390

Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 45

Ireland—Questions

Asylums—Monaghan Asylum, 154

Board of National Education—Teachers and the Orange Society, 23, 1069

Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Acquittals at the Tyrone Winter Assizes, 1748

Evictions—Carrickmacross Union, 1585

Land Law Acts—Report of the Royal Commission, 585

Law and Justice—Jury System—Monaghan Assizes, 1401, 1402, 1727, 1728

Magistracy—Listowel, Co. Kerry, 575

Royal Commission on the Land Law Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land Act, 1885, 1748

Parliament—Order—Withdrawal of a Question from the Notice Paper, 1754

Skye Crofters—Withdrawal of Police, 705

O'BRIEN, Mr. P. J., Tipperary, N.

Ireland—Salmon Fisheries—The River Shannon—Fines on the Conservators, 163

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., Donegal, E.

Admiralty—Subscriptions to the Imperial Institute, 1409

America (South)—Chili—Imprisonment of a Sailor named Carrol at Punta Arenas, 471

Army—Subscription to the Imperial Institute—Circular of the Commander-in-Chief, 298

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Donegal and Tyrone Militia, 1398

Army (Ordnance Department)—Inspector of Saddlery at Woolwich, 1399

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1769, 1796, 1798, 1817, 1826, 1830, 1832, 1850

"Board of Trade Journal"—Advertising Agents, 580

Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Allowances for Horses, 28

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 208, 236, 530, 615, 616, 632, 1623, 1649; Amendt. 1667, 1670

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 738, 742, 743, 744, 750, 752

Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, 768, 771

Civil Service Commission, 775; Amendt. 779, 783, 784, 785, 792, 797, 802

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 820, 822, 823, 824, 827, 833

Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1487

Foreign Office, 767, 768

Houses of Parliament, 726, 727

Post Office, 1534

Public Buildings, Great Britain, 730, 734, 735

Science and Art Department, &c. 837, 1223

"Telegrafo" Claims, 1522, 1529

Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, &c. 1504

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 845, 846

Trade and Manufacture—French Prohibition of English Leather, 1396

O'CONNOR, Mr. Alderman J., Kerry, S.

Ireland (Distress, &c.)—Distress in Kerry, 174

O'CONNOR, Mr. J., Tipperary, S.

Ireland—Evictions—Case of James Clery, Ardmoyle, Cashel—Conduct of an Emergency Man, 1073

Gun Licences—Case of James Maye, Ardfinan, Co. Tipperary, 1073

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1549

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 429, 497, 532, 606, 619, 620, 949, 976, 1611, 1677

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1173, 1180, 1182, 1185

Local Government Board, &c. 811

Post Office, 1532, 1535

Public Education (Ireland), 1445

Science and Art Department, &c. 839, 840

Treasury Chest Robbery, 1531

O'CONNOR, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
 Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1818, 1842
 Ireland—Magistracy—Appointment of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 180
 London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 913
 Parliament—Business of the House, 1410, 1412
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Motion for Adjournment, 199, 204, 933, 967; Motion for Adjournment, 973, 1297, 1301, 1357, 1606, 1645, 1646, 1653, 1667, 1683, 1691
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1188, 1190
 Houses of Parliament, 728
 Public Buildings, Great Britain, 736

O'DOHERTY, Mr. J. E., *Donegal, N.*
 Ireland—Fisheries—Boat Slip at Fanad Point, Co. Donegal, 1386
 Inland Revenue—The "Death Duties" on Land in Ulster, 1267, 1720, 1721
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 651, 944, 1297, 1308; Amendt. 1322, 1323, 1326, 1609, 1673, 1702
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 743
 Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 826, 831
 Local Government Board, &c. 819
 Public Buildings, Great Britain, 738
 Science and Art Department, 1436
 Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, 1507

O'HANLON, Mr. T., *Cavan, E.*
 Ireland—Post Office—Grangegeith Post Office, 576, 709
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 620, 1011
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1156, 1159
 Public Education, Ireland, 1453, 1455

O'HEA, Mr. P., *Donegal, W.*
 Ireland—High Court of Justice—"Box Fund," 890, 891
 Irish Land Commission—Sale of Lands in Co. Donegal, 471
 Post Office (Telegraph Department)—Telegraphic Address "House of Commons," 1065
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Adelaide Exhibition, 1520
 Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 825, 826
 Houses of Parliament, 730
 Local Government Board, &c. 808
 Post Office, 1537
 Public Buildings, Great Britain, 732, 738
 Science and Art Department, 1439, 1441

O'KELLY, Mr. J., *Roscommon, N.*
 Army (Supplementary Estimates)—Army Services, 1815, 1816, 1843
 Ireland—Questions
 Drainage and Navigation—Shannon Works—Lecarrow Harbour, 721
 Evictions—Lord Kingston's Estates, Co. Roscommon, 1339
 Royal Commission on Agriculture—Evictions, 1338, 1339

Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) Bill
(Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Elton, Mr. Mark Stewart)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * Feb 18 [Bill 17]

ONslow, Earl of
 Malta, Motion for Papers, 1232
 Potter's Patent, 2R. 558

Ordinance Department—See *Army*

ORDNANCE — Surveyor General (*see* NORTHCOTE, Hon. H. S.)

ORMONDE, Marquess of
 Army—Insanitary Condition of Knightsbridge and Dublin Barracks, 559, 561
 Ireland—Magistracy—Appointment of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 1023

Owners of Dogs' Liability Bill
(Mr. Addison, Mr. Arthur O'Connor)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * Feb 28 [Bill 181]

Pacific Ports, The—Ill-Usage of British Seamen

Questions, Mr. Norris; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Feb 18, 41; Feb 22, 300

Pacific Islands—See title Southern Pacific

PAGET, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*

First Offenders, 2R. 122
 Metropolis—Street Improvements—Charing Cross Road—National Gallery, 1068
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 938, 940; Amendt. 967
 Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 48
 Post Office (Telegraph Department)—Telegraphic Address, "House of Commons," 1064, 1065
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, &c. 1221

PALMER, Sir C. M., *Durham, Jarrow*

London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance—Extension of the Import to the Metropolitan Area, 1076

PARKER, Mr. C. S., *Perth*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1325

Parliament

LORDS—

Private Bills

Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Friday the 24th day of June next: [and other Orders] *Mar 3, 1923*

COMMONS—

Address in Answer to the Queen's Speech

Report of Address brought up, and read a first and second time *Feb 18, 47*

Bulgaria—Abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg

Amendt. at end of 3rd paragraph, insert "But, at the same time, humbly to express to Your Majesty that steps taken on behalf of Your Government, without the concurrence of the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, to prevent the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, were not in accordance with the interests of this Country, and were fraught with danger to the peace of Europe" (*Mr. Labouchere*), 63; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after debate, Question put, and negatived

South Africa—Affairs of Zululand, Observations, Dr. Clark; Debate thereon *Feb 18, 87*

Crime and Outrage (Ireland)—The Barabavilla Murder Trial

Amendt. at end of 12th paragraph, insert "And humbly to represent to Your Majesty that it is the duty of Your Government to institute a full and searching inquiry into the means by which convictions were obtained against certain persons at present undergoing penal servitude for an alleged conspiracy to murder at Barabavilla, in the county of Westmeath" (*Mr. Twite*) *Feb 18, 106*; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Address agreed to

HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS reported *Feb 24, 485*

Private Bill Legislation, Question, Mr. Craig Sellar; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 7, 1409*

The Chiltern Hundreds—Withdrawal of Application—Captain Ker, Member for East Down, Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 10, 1754*

The Secretary for Scotland—Legislation, Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 10, 1749*

ORDER

The Royal Commission on Trade and Agriculture, Question, Mr. Chaplin; Answer, Mr. Speaker *Feb 18, 15*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—Order—cont.

Notice of Motion on going into Committee of Supply, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, Mr. Speaker *Feb 28, 724*

Withdrawal of a Question from the Notice Paper, Observations, Question, Mr. E. Harrington; Answer, Mr. Speaker; Observations, Mr. T. W. Russell; Question, Mr. P. O'Brien [No reply] *Mar 10, 1752*

PRIVILEGE

Imputations on Members of this House, Questions, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Storey; Answers, Mr. Speaker *Feb 22, 286*

Premature Publication of the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill, Questions, Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Feb 18, 129*; Personal Explanation, Mr. Mundella; Observations, Mr. Byron Reed *Feb 21, 181*

RULES OF DEBATE

Offensive Language, Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 8, 1592*

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Ash Wednesday

Moved, "That this House will meet To-morrow at Two of the clock" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) *Feb 22, 286*; Question put; A. 240, N. 86; M. 154 (D. L. 19)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 24, 434*; Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 7, 1410*; — *Questions and Answers* — "Votes and Proceedings," Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 18, 46*; — *Railway Rates and Land Reform—Legislation*, Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 18, 47*; — *Committee of Supply—Supplementary Estimates* — Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); short debate thereon, *Feb 25, 584*; — *Order of Supply*, Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 4, 1361*; — *Coal Mines Regulation Bill*, Question, Mr. D. Crawford; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 10, 1740*

QUESTIONS

Election Expenses, 1886—The Return, Question, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart - Wortley) *Feb 22, 299*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—Questions—cont.

Charges of Returning Officers (Scotland), Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Mar 8, 1872*

House of Commons—Fogs, Questions, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Henry Tyler; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) Mar 7, 1897

Members' Smoking Room, Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) Mar 7, 1907

Parliament—The New Rules of Procedure (1882)—Rule 2 (Adjournment of the House)—Matter, London Corporation (Charges of Malversation)

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (Mr. Howell) *Mar 1, 1895*; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure) Rule 1 (Closure of Debate)

Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 22, 1905*; Question, Mr. Curzon; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 28, 1904*; Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar 4, 1874*

Moved, "That, at any time after a Question has been proposed, a Motion may be made, if the consent of the Chair has been previously obtained, 'That the Question be now put.' Such Motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate: When the Motion 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made (the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair; and also if a Clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (with the consent of the Chair as aforesaid) That the Question, That the Clause stand part, or be added to the Bill, be now put. Such Motions shall be put forthwith, and decided without Amendment or Debate: Provided always, That Questions for the Closure of Debate shall not be decided in the affirmative, if a Division be taken, unless it shall appear by the numbers declared from the Chair, that such Motion was supported by more than Two Hundred Members, or was opposed by less than Forty Members, and supported by more than One Hundred Members" (Mr. William Henry Smith) *Feb 21, 1900*; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (Mr. T. P. O'Connor); after further short debate, Motion withdrawn

Original Question again proposed, 209; after long debate, Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Second Night] *Feb 22, 1906*; after long debate, Debate further adjourned

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate)—cont.

Debate resumed [Third Night] *Feb 23, 1899*; after debate, Debate further adjourned till To-morrow

Debate resumed [Fourth Night] *Feb 24, 1885* Amendt. in line 1, after "That," insert "when Mr. Speaker is in the Chair" (Colonel Nolan), 493; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 82, N. 204; M. 122 (D. L. 22) Amendt. in line 1, leave out "at any time" (Mr. Parnell), 503; Question proposed, "That the words 'at any time' stand part of the Question;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Amendt. in line 1, after "Question," insert "other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland" (Mr. Parnell), 508; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Amendt. to proposed Amendt. after the words "Law in" insert "Great Britain and" (Mr. J. E. Ellis), 518; Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the proposed Amendt.;" after further debate, Question put, and agreed to

Question put, "That the words 'other than a Question arising in any Bill for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Great Britain and Ireland' be there inserted;" A. 155, N. 264; M. 109 (D. L. 23)

Amendt. in line 1, after "Question," insert "other than a Vote in Committee of Supply" (Mr. Parnell), 541; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Fifth Night] *Feb 25, 1886*; after short debate, Question put; A. 92, N. 261; M. 169 (D. L. 24)

Amendt. in line 1, insert after "Question," "not being a Question relating to the Procedure of the House" (Mr. Sexton), 610; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 80, N. 170; M. 90 (D. L. 25)

Amendt. in line 1, after "Question," insert "other than the Question, on going into Committee of Supply, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (Mr. Thomas Gill) 625; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 78, N. 210; M. 132 (D. L. 26)

Amendt. in line 1, insert after "proposed," "and debated in the House for six hours, or in Committee of the Whole House for one hour" (Mr. Parnell), 637; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 82, N. 268; M. 186 (D. L. 27)

Amendt. in line 1, insert after "proposed," "and has been replied to by at least four Members" (Mr. Parnell); Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Main Question, as amended, proposed, 652; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (Mr. Esslemont); after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate)—cont.

Amendt. in line 1, insert after "proposed," "and after adequate debate" (*Mr. Esslemont*); Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Main Question again proposed; Debate adjourned

The Adjourned Debate, Question, *Mr. Courtney*; Answer, *Mr. Speaker Mar 1*, 894

Debate resumed [Sixth Night] *Mar 1*, 916

Amendt. in line 1, insert after "proposed," "arising out of the first or second Order of the Day, or a Motion standing first or second on the Notice Paper of the House" (*Mr. Sexton*), 919; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 83, N. 209; M. 126 (D. L. 32)

After debate, Amendt. in line 1, insert after "proposed," "and opportunity afforded for Debate thereon" (*Mr. Molloy*), 929; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after debate, Question put; A. 186, N. 241; M. 55 (D. L. 33)

Amendt. in line 1, insert after the word "proposed," "if no Amendment has been moved thereto" (*Mr. Parnell*), 960; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 116, N. 302; M. 186 (D. L. 34)

Amendt. in line 1, leave out from "proposed," to end of line 4, insert, "A Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,' and, unless it shall appear to the Chair that such Motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the Question, 'That the Question be now put,' shall be put forthwith, and decided, without Amendment or Debate" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*), 968; Question proposed, "That the words 'a Motion may be made' stand part of the Question;" after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be adjourned till To-morrow" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*)

Amendt. to leave out "To-morrow," insert "Friday" (*Mr. Parnell*); Question proposed, "That 'To-morrow,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 110, N. 243; M. 133 (D. L. 35)

Original Question again proposed, 975; after short debate, Question put; A. 223, N. 97; M. 126 (D. L. 36)

Main Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Seventh Night] *Mar 2*, 980; after debate, Question put; A. 85, N. 190; M. 105 (D. L. 37)

Question proposed, "That the words 'A Member rising in his place,' &c." (*Mr. William Henry Smith*), 993

Amendt. to proposed Amendt. after "Member," insert "of the Government, or the Mover or Seconder of the Motion then in Debate, or the Mover or Seconder of an Amendment thereto" (*Mr. Leake*), 997; Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the proposed Amendt.;" after

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate)—cont.

debate, Question put; A. 119, N. 291; M. 172 (D. L. 38)

Amendt. to proposed Amendt. to leave out "unless it shall appear to the Chair" (*Mr. Whitbread*), 1020; Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendt.;" Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Eighth Night] *Mar 4*, 1275; after long debate, Question put; A. 177, N. 130; M. 47 (D. L. 40)

Amendt. to proposed Amendt. line 4, leave out "an abuse of the Rules of the House or" (*Mr. O'Doherty*), 1324; Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendt.;" [Question not put]

After short debate, Amendt. proposed to said proposed Amendt. leave out, "or an infringement of the rights of the minority" (*Mr. Whitbread*); Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said proposed Amendt.;" after debate, Question put; A. 275, N. 200; M. 75

Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1349

Amendt. to said proposed Amendt. after "minority," insert "in respect of Debate, or otherwise" (*Mr. Parnell*), 1355; Question proposed, "That those words be inserted in the said proposed Amendt.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 107, N. 226; M. 119 (D. L. 42)

Question again proposed, "That the words 'A Member rising in his place may,' &c." (*Mr. William Henry Smith*), 1360; after short debate, Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Ninth Night] *Mar 8*, 1593; after debate, Question put; A. 160, N. 70; M. 90 (D. L. 47)

Amendt. to leave out from first "When," in line 5, to "Chair," in line 9, both inclusive (*Mr. Parnell*), 1621; Question proposed, "That the words 'When the Motion' 'That the Question be now put,' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided, any further Motion may be made,' stand part of the Question;" after debate, Question put; A. 231, N. 105; M. 176 (D. L. 48)

Amendt. in line 7, leave out "the consent of the Chair having been previously obtained," insert "the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*), 1647; Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question;" Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Dr. Clark*); Question put; A. 94, N. 292; M. 198 (D. L. 49)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question;" after short debate, Question put; A. 67, N. 267; M. 200 (D. L. 50)

Question proposed, "That the words, 'The assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld,' be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 244, N. 78; M. 166 (D. L. 51)

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate)—cont.

Main Question, as amended, again proposed 1658; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Dillwyn*); after short debate, Question put; A. 93, N. 229; M. 136 (D. L. 52)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed, 1661; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Tenth Night] *Mar 9, 1666*

Amendt. in line 8, leave out "any Question already," insert "the Question last previously" (*Mr. Arthur O'Connor*) v., 1670; Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question;" after debate, Question put; A. 170, N. 109; M. 61 (D. L. 53)

After short debate, Amendt. in line 9, leave out, after "Chair," to "such," in line 11 (*Mr. Sexton*), 1685; Question proposed, "That the words 'and also if a clause be then under consideration' stand part of the Question;" after further debate, Debate adjourned

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS

New Member Sworn

Feb 21—John Slagg, esquire, *Burnley*

Parliamentary Elections (Seamen's Vote) Bill

(*Mr. Atkinson, Sir Robert*

Fowler, Mr. Baden-Powell, Mr. Grotrian, Mr. Thomas Sutherland, Mr. Ewart, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. King, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Mar 7* [Bill 190]

Parliamentary Franchise—Revision of the Parliamentary Voters' List

Question, Mr. P. McDonald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Feb 18, 30*

Parliamentary Registration Act, 1878—Case of Henry Holder, Registration Agent at Stafford

Question, Mr. McLaren; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 21, 156*

PARNELL, Mr. C. S., *Cork*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 199, 202, 209, 212, 496; Amendt. 503, 505, 538, 539, 541, 599, 611, 614, 634, 646, 652, 655, 942, 957, 965; Motion for Adjournment, 970, 1008, 1352, 1360, 1598, 1600, 1615, 1622, 1624, 1643, 1647, 1650, 1652, 1658, 1659, 1703

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1183, 1186, 1188, 1210, 1211, 1213

Science and Art Department, Motion for reporting Progress, 834, 1221, 1224

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 851

PAULTON, Mr. J. M., *Durham, Bishop Auckland*

Coroners' Inquests—View of the Bodies, 578

PEASE, Mr. A. E., *York*

Africa (West Coast)—Mr. H. H. Johnston, H.M. Vice Consul, 1742

Mozambique—Protection of British Subjects—H.M.S. "Reindeer," 1741

PEEL, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* SPEAKER, The)

PENTON, Captain F. T., *Finsbury, Central Prison Sites*—Housing of the Working Classes—Coldbath Fields Prison, 459

PETERBOROUGH, Bishop of Church Patronage, 2R. 1035

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.] (*The Earl of Milltown*)

l. Presented; read 1^o * *Feb 22* (No. 28)

PICKARD, Mr. B., *York, W. R., Norman-ton*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 603

PICKERSGILL, Mr. E. H., *Bethnal Green, S.W.*

Parks (Metropolis)—Regent's Park, 1405

Post Office (England and Wales)—Appointment of Medical Officers, 1268

Head Postmasterships, 1394

PICOT, Mr. J. A., *Leicester*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 419

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1426

Vaccination—Case of James Bamford, 1573

Mr. Robert King, Evington, 1267, 1393

PINKERTON, Mr. J., *Galway*

Ireland, State of—Procession of Orange Bands—Ballymoney, 30, 31

PITT-LEWIS, Mr. G., *Devon, Barnstaple*

Burials—Removal of the Dead from Churchyards and Burial Grounds, 19

PLAYFAIR, Right Hon. Sir Lyon, *Leeds, S.*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. Motion for Adjournment, 271, 306, 317, 1342

PLOWDEN, Sir W. C., *Wolverhampton, W.*

War Office (Ordnance Department)—Deficiencies in Naval Guns and Ammunition, 882, 1407

PLUNKET, Right Hon. D. R. (First Commissioner of Works), Dublin University

Admiralty and War Office—The New Buildings, 16; Motion for a Select Committee, 1361
Burial Acts—Brompton Cemetery, 705, 706
Civil Service Commissioners—Examinations for Clerk of Works under the Board of Trade, 1741
Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 842, 844
Metropolis—Street Improvements—New Line of St. Martin's Place, 462, 1067, 1068
Parks (Metropolis)—Questions
Battersea Park, 700, 1393
Regent's Park, 1405
Victoria Park, 478
Parliament—House of Commons—Fogs, 1397; —Members' Smoking Room, 1407
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Admiralty and War Office, The New, 740, 746, 747
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 753, 756, 759
Houses of Parliament, 726, 727, 728, 730
Public Buildings, Great Britain, 732, 733, 734, 736, 737, 738
Westminster Bridge, 460

Police and Constabulary Forces in Great Britain—Superannuation

Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Feb 18, 34

Police Clothing—The System of Contracts

Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Mar 3, 1070

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)
(Questions)

Case of James Westbury, an Agricultural Labourer, Questions, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir Henry Tyler; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) Feb 25, 572
Emigration of Children to Canada, Question, Mr. Rankin; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) Mar 10, 1729
Law of Settlement and Removal, Question, Mr. Llewellyn; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) Mar 4, 1261

Potters' Patent Bill

l. Read 2^a, after short debate Feb 25, 557

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)
(Questions)

Appointment of Medical Officers, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 4, 1268
Appointments to Postmasterships, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 3, 1035

POST OFFICE (England and Wales)—cont.

Head Postmasters, Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 1, 871; Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 7, 1394
Mail Service to the Island of Harris, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) Feb 28, 703
Parcel Post to New Zealand, Question, Mr. Godson; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 8, 1590
Postage to India and China through Belgium, Questions, Mr. King; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 22, 291; Feb 28, 710
"Post Office Patronage"—Sub-Office, Bute Street, Cardiff, Questions, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 4, 1258
Secretary's Office—Promotion, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 1, 889
The Secretary to the Post Office—Address from Officials, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 7, 1400
The Pattern Post, Question, Mr. Montagu; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 21, 162
The Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Letter Carriers, Question, Major Ross; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 10, 1732

SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT

Deputation of Clerks, Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 7, 1403
Post Office Savings Bank Department, Queen Victoria Street—Insanitary Condition, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 28, 692

TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT

Central Telegraph Office—Promotion, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 28, 694
Clerks, Question, Mr. H. S. Wright; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Feb 21, 177
Pre-Transfer Clerks, Question, Mr. H. S. Wright; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 3, 1063
Stamped Telegraph Cards, Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 7, 1406
Telegraphic Address, "House of Commons," Questions, Sir Richard Paget, Mr. O'Hea; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 3, 1064
Telegraph Inspectorship at Liverpool, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) Mar 10, 1733
Transmission of a False and Unsigned Telegram, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) Feb 18, 33

POST OFFICE—Telegraph Department—cont.

Telegrams to and from France—The Submarine Cable Company, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Feb 28, 707*

Post Office Mail Contract (Highland Fisheries Company, Limited)

Ordered, That the Contract with the Highland Fisheries Company, Limited, for the conveyance of Mails between Oban, Coll, Tyree, Barra, and Loch Boisdale, be approved (Mr. Jackson) *Feb 22*

POWELL, Mr. F. S., Wigan

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 149, 150
Charity Commission—Scheme for Christ's Hospital, 701
Education Department—New Code, 1887, 888
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 350
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1433

POWER, Mr. P. J., Waterford, E.

Ireland—Questions
Magistracy—Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 481
Royal Irish Constabulary—Notices issued by the Deputy Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 1081, 1082
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 515, 618, 940, 1003, 1004, 1639
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 113
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 807

POWIS, Earl of

Wales (Church of England)—Income from Ecclesiastical Property, Motion for a Return, 1254

PRICE, Captain G. E., Devonport

Merchant Shipping Acts—Boat Accommodation on Passenger Ships, 876

PRIME MINISTER (see SALISBURY, Marquess of)

Prisons (Great Britain)

Prison Labour—Mat-Making, Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Feb 18, 37*; Question, Mr. Quilter; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Mar 3, 1068*

Prison Sites—Housing of the Working Classes—Coldbath Fields, Questions, Mr. Jennings, Captain Penton; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Feb 24, 458*

Public Departments, Royal Commission on—Compulsory Retirements

Question, Mr. Menzies; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 8, 1582*

Public Health Act, 1875—Assessment of Allotment Gardens

Question, Sir Frederick Mappin; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 10, 1726*

Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill

(Dr. Cameron, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Graham)

c. Ordered; read 1^o *Feb 24* [Bill 180]

Public Meeting (England and Ireland), Right of—The Plan of Campaign—Suppression of Public Meetings

Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) *Mar 4, 1274*

Public Offices—The New Admiralty and War Offices

Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Feb 18, 16*

Public Offices—The New Admiralty and War Offices

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to reconsider the plans and proposals for an Admiralty and War Office:—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may with advantage be retained" (Mr. Plunket) *Mar 4, 1360*; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Public Service, The—Retired Pay or Pensions—The Return

Questions, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar 8, 1589*

PULESTON, Mr. J. H., Devonport

Parliament—House of Commons—Members' Smoking Room, 1407
Post Office—Stamped Telegraph Cards, 1406
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 786, 795, 799, 802

Queen, The—Celebration of the Jubilee Year

A Review, Question, Sir Henry Fletcher; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 10, 1735*

Commissions to Non-Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers of the Army and Navy, Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) *Mar 8, 1586*

Special Service in Westminster Abbey, Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Feb 28, 722*

Queen's Plates

Questions, Mr. Mildmay, Colonel Nolan; Answers, Sir Herbert Maxwell (A Lord of the Treasury) *Feb 25, 580*

QUILTER, Mr. W. F., Suffolk, S.

Great Eastern Railway and Felixstowe Railway and Dock Companies, 2R. 437
Prisons (Great Britain)—Prison Labour—Mat-Making, 1063

RAIKES, Right Hon. H. C. (Postmaster General), Cambridge University

Parliament—Public Business—Committee of Supply, 584

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 261, 264, 267, 268, 269, 547, 985, 986, 1355, 1682

Post Office—Questions

Appointment of Medical Officers, 1268
Appointments to Postmasterships, 1085
Head Postmasters, 871, 1395
Parcel Post to New Zealand, 1590
Patronage—Sub-Office, Bute Street, Cardiff, 1258
Pattern Post, 162
Postage to India and China through Belgium, 292, 711

Post Office Savings Bank Department, Queen Victoria Street—Insanitary Condition, 693;—Deputation of Clerks, 1403
Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Letter Carriers, 1732

Secretary to the Post Office, 1401
Secretary's Office—Promotion, 890
Stamped Telegraph Cards, 1406
Submarine Cable Company, 707

Post Office (Telegraph Department)—Questions

Central Telegraph Office—Promotion, 695
Telegraph Clerks, 177, 1064
Telegraphic Address, "House of Commons," 1064, 1065
Telegraph Inspectorship at Liverpool, 1733

Post Office (Ireland)

Annual Holidays, 34
Belfast and County Down Railway Company, 1269
Belfast Postmen, 172
Delivery between Drumlish and Fairnaught, Co. Leitrim, 1259

English and Irish Officials, 564
Grangeith Post Office, 576, 710

Letter Carrier between Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumsna, 293

Postal Service in the North of Ireland, 887
Post Office at Whitty's Cross, Co. Wexford, 1080

Post Office Contracts—Conveyance between Mullingar and Ballymahon, 1737

Telegraph Department—Telegraph Extension, Co. Donegal, 1265;—Telegraphic Communication between Wexford and Enniscorthy, 1083

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Post Office, 1538, 1542
Post Office Telegraphs, 1543

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill [H.L.]

(*The Lord Stanley of Preston*)

l. Presented; read 1st *Feb 28* (No. 32)

Railway Rates

Question, Lord Vernon; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Lord Stanley of Preston) *Feb 18, 7*

RANKIN, Mr. J., Herefordshire, Leominster

Charity Commissioners—Education Schemes, 1730

Poor Law—Emigration of Children to Canada, 1729

RASCH, Major F. C., Essex, S.E.

Army—Medical Officers—Status, 690

Ordnance Department—Defective Weapons—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets, 299

Metropolis—Street Improvements—Charing Cross Road—The National Gallery, 1067

RATHBONE, Mr. W., Carnarvonshire, Arfon

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 233, 1691

Rating of Machinery Bill

(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Peacock, Sir Frederick Thorpe Mappin*)

c. Read 2^o,* and referred to a Select Comm. *Mar 2* [Bill 148]

REDMOND, Mr. J. E., Wexford, N.

Ireland—Post Office—Post Office at Whitty's Cross, Co. Wexford, 1079;—Telegraph Department—Telegraphic Communication between Wexford and Enniscorthy, 1082

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1108, 1109, 1160, 1164

REED, Sir E. J., Cardiff

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1860

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 543, 627

REED, Mr. H. B., Bradford, E.

Navy—Contract System of the Admiralty—Royal Commission—Irregular Publication of Evidence, 1587

Parliament—Privilege—Premature Publication of the Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment, 129, 130; Personal Explanation, 185

REID, Mr. R. T., Dumfries, &c.

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 402

REYNOLDS, Mr. W. J., Tyrone, E.

Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Purchasers of Glebe Land, 706, 889

RIBBLESDALE, Lord

Horse Breeding and Supply for Military and Industrial Purposes, 1363, 1379

RICHARD, Mr. H., *Merthyr Tydvil*

Africa (East Coast)—Rumoured Annexation of Territory, 1721

RIDLEY, Sir M. W., *Lancashire, N., Blackpool*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 803

RIPON, Marquess of

India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Liberation of 25,000 Prisoners, 286

RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T. (President of the Local Government Board), *Tower Hamlets, St. George's*

Allotments for Small Householders, 469

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1550

Lunacy Laws—Alleged Confinement of a Sane Woman, 1734

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 412

Poor Law—Questions

Case of James Westbury, an Agricultural Labourer, 573, 574

Emigration of Children to Canada, 1720

Law of Settlement and Removal, 1261

Public Health Act, 1875 — Assessment of Allotment Gardens, 1726

Rivers Pollution — Pollution of the Upper Thames, 468

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 804, 805, 809, 810

Sutton District Water, Res. 14

Vaccination—Questions
883

Cumulative Penalties—Case of Charles Hayward, 1265

Increase of Syphilis, 463

Inquiry by the Royal Statistical Society, 1271, 1272

Mr. Robert King, Evington, 1267

Vaccination Acts—Keighley, &c., 693

Water Supply (Metropolis)—Chelsea Water Company, 881

Rivers Pollution—Pollution of the Upper Thames

Question, Colonel Dawnay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) Feb 24, 467

Rivers Pollution Prevention Act (1876) Amendment Bill

(*Mr. Thorburn, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Laing Brown*)
c. Ordered; read 1^o * Mar 4 [Bill 188]

ROBERTSON, Mr. E., *Dundee*

Grants to Members of the Royal Family, 582, 1272

ROBERTSON, Mr. E.—*cont.*

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1547

Parliament—Rules of Debate—Offensive Language, 1592

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 614

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Treasury Chest Robbery, Motion for reporting Progress, 1531

ROBINSON, Mr. B., *Dudley*

Inland Revenue—Income Tax—Allowance to Colliery Proprietors, 1731

ROBINSON, Mr. T., *Gloucester*

Vaccination, 883

ROLLIT, Sir A. K., *Islington, S.*

Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment, 2R. 127

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 344

ROSCOE, Sir H. E., *Manchester, S.*

Literature, Science, and Art—National Science Collections—The Inter-Departmental Committee, 1396

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Houses of Parliament, 728
Science and Art Department, 1417, 1418

ROSS, Major A. H., *Maidstone*

Post Office—The Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Letter Carriers, 1732

ROWLANDS, Mr. J., *Finsbury, E.*

Army and Navy—"Contracts and Supplies," 475

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 145

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 907

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 548

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 762

ROWNTREE, Mr. J., *Scarborough*

Sea Fisheries—Collection of Statistics, 42

Royal Family, Grants to Members of the

Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 25, 582;—*A Select Committee*, Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 4, 1272

RUSSELL, Sir C., *Hackney, S.*

Vaccination—Inquiry by the Royal Statistical Society, 1270, 1272

RUSSELL, Mr. E. R., Glasgow, Bridgeton
First Offenders, 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 127
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1548
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Local Government Board, &c. 818

RUSSELL, Mr. T. W., Tyrone, S.
Ireland—Questions
Crime and Outrage—Murder of—Murphy, near Killarney, 302
Law and Justice—Jury System—"Queen v. John Dillon," 474
Magistracy—Appointment of Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 180
Parliament—Order—Withdrawal of a Question from the Notice Paper, 1753, 1754

SALISBURY, Marquess of (Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

Church Patronage, 2R. 1042
Currency—Gold and Silver—Royal Commission, 676
Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 666
Egypt—Native Egyptian Army, Motion for a Paper, 1253
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R. 860
Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 3, 1708
Law of Evidence Amendment, 2R. 433

SALT, Mr. T., Stafford

Lunacy Laws Consolidation—Incorporation of "The Idiots' Act, 1886," 1037
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate) Res. 228, 231, 990

SAMUELSON, Sir B., Oxfordshire, Banbury
Railways (India)—Extension of the Railway System, 568
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Science and Art Department, 1424

Sanitary Registration of Buildings Bill
(Mr. Lacaite, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Guyer Hunter, Dr. Cameron, Sir Henry Roscoe)
c. Ordered; read 1° * Feb 22 [Bill 178]

SAUNDERSON, Colonel E. J., Armagh, N.
Ireland—Questions
Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Acquittals at the Tyrone Winter Assizes, 1747
Law and Justice—"Queen v. Dillon"—Safety of the Dissenting Jurors, 1410
Magistracy—The O'Donnellan Blake Forster, J.P. 1393

SCHWANN, Mr. C. E., Manchester, N.
Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 447

SCLATER-BOOTH, Right Hon. G., Hants, Basingstoke
Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 453
First Offenders, 2R. 116
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 549, 550, 588, 596, 934, 937, 963, 983, 1651
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Civil Service Commission, 794
Science and Art Department, 1437

SCOTLAND—Secretary for, &c. (see BALFOUR, Right Hon. A. J.)

SCOTLAND (Questions)

Commissioners of Northern Lights—Expenditure of Lighthouse Boards, Questions, Dr. Clark, Mr. Conybeare, Dr. Cameron; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 22, 302; Questions, Dr. Cameron; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 24, 469
Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886—Recovery of Arrears of Rent, Question, Mr. A. Sutherland; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) Feb 21, 171
Factories Acts—The Truck Acts, Questions, Mr. Watt, Dr. Clark; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) Feb 22, 301
Harbours, &c.—Giglum Sound, Question, Colonel Malcolm; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Feb 22, 294
Intestates, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 28, 691
Mines—Assistant Inspectorship of Mines in Western Division, Question, Mr. Cunningham-Graham; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Feb 18, 39
Register House, Edinburgh—Searches of Incumbrances, Question, Mr. Wallace; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Mar 10, 1717
Sassine Office, Edinburgh—Revenue and Expenditure, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 28, 703;—*Sale of Stamps*, Question, Mr. McEwan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 22, 288
Skye Crofters—Withdrawal of Police, Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) Feb 28, 705

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND)

Cambusnethan Public School, Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) Feb 25, 562

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)

Salmon Fisheries—Legislation, Questions, Mr. Mark Stewart, Dr. Clark; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) Mar 7, 1405

SCOTLAND—*Fisheries*—cont.

The Trawling at Ballantrae, Ayrshire, Question, Mr. Vernon; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) *Mar* 8, 1580

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)

The Canteen Committee of Fort George, Inverness, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick) *Feb* 24, 476

Trial of Peter White and Others, Charged with Mobbing and Rioting at Motherwell, Question, Mr. D. Crawford; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) *Mar* 3, 1059

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND)

Private Prosecutions, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) *Feb* 28, 692

Scotland—Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882 (Dollar Institution)

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her consent from Section 22 of Scheme 88 of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission, under 'The Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882'" (Mr. A. L. Brown) *Feb* 21, 271; after short debate, Question put; A. 77, N. 135; M. 58 (D. L. 18)

Scotland—Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882 (Mackintosh Farr Fund)

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme for the management of the Mackintosh Farr Fund" (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) *Feb* 28, 852; Motion postponed

SELBORNE, Earl of

Church Patronage, 2R. 1040
Cophold Enfranchisement, 2R. 869
Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 665
Law of Evidence Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 5, 1026
Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. 133; *cl.* 3, 135, 138; *cl.* 42, 141; Postponed *cl.* 3, 870; Report, 1705, 1706

SELLAR, Mr. A. C., *Lanarkshire, Partick*

Parliament—Private Bill Legislation, 1409
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 222

SELWIN-IBBETSON, Right Hon. Sir H. J., *Essex, Epping*

First Offenders, 2R. 121
Metropolitan Police—Inspectors of the Criminal Investigation Department, 17
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Buildings, Great Britain, 731
Various Services (other than Consular) in Connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, 1512

SELWYN, Captain C. W., *Cambridge, Wisbeach*

Income Tax—Married Women's Property Act, 577

SEXTON, Mr. T., *Belfast, W.*

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1844
Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 556
Corrupt Practices at Elections—J. M. Williamson, 466
Dublin Southern District Tramways, 2R. 562, 690
Dublin Southern District Tramways [Repayment of Deposits], Res. 1665
Ecclesiastical Commissioners—Income and Expenditure in Wales, Motion for a Paper, 557

Ireland—Questions

Board of National Education—Mrs. Harriet Sonter, a Teacher in Belfast, 24
Crime and Outrage—Co. Clare, 473, 474; —Riots at Belfast—Extra Pay to the Military, 41; —Report of Mr. Wallace MacHardy, 172
Evictions—The Return, 32
Irish Land Commission—Lord Annesley's Estate, Belfast, 26; —Sittings at Sligo, 173
Irish Land Question, 1749
Post Office—Annual Holidays, 34; —Belfast Postmen, 172
Railways—Loan to the Sligo, &c. Railway Company, 293
Royal Commission on the Land Law Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land Act, 1885, 1748
State of Ireland—Proclamation of Meeting at Coolgreany, 305, 716, 717; —Proclamation of Meetings in Wicklow and Wexford, 473
Subornation of Information — Head Constable Maurice O'Halloran, 1269
The Executive—The New Chief Secretary, 1409

Ireland—Law and Justice—Questions

Criminal Prosecutions—The Privy Council, 1262
Jury System—Clare Assizes, 1751
Trial of Mr. J. Dillon and others in Dublin, 484

Ireland—Magistracy—Questions

Duleek Petty Pensions, 159
Sir Thomas G. Esmonde, M.P., High Sheriff of Co. Waterford, 481, 482, 1261
Speech of Major George Johnston, J.P., at Glenties, Co. Donegal, 702

Magistracy (England and Wales)—Mr. George Fyde Rowley, High Sheriff of Rutlandshire, 1270

Parliament—Business of the House, 484; —Committee of Supply, 584, 724
Parliament—Chiltern Hundreds—Withdrawal of Application, 1754
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 387, 512, 592; Amendt. 609, 639, 917, 937, 941, 1671, 1684, 1703
Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Special Service in Westminster Abbey, 723

SHEEHAN, Mr. J. D., *Kerry, E.*

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Samuel Down-
ing, Co. Kerry, 714

SINCLAIR, Mr. W. P., *Falkirk, &c.*

Irish Land Question, 1748

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scot-
land), 2R. 1546

SMITH, Right Hon. W. H. (First Lord
of the Treasury), *Strand, West-*
minster

Agricultural Labourers' Allotments, 722

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Ser-
vices, 1786, 1862

Army and Navy Estimates—Reference to a
Committee of the Whole House, 179, 723

Charity Commissioners—The Dauntsey Charity,
893

Foreign Powers—Advice and Remonstrance,
483

Grants to Members of the Royal Family, 582,
1272

Harbour Accommodation Committee, 892

Horses—Prohibition of Export from Great
Britain, 483

Imperial Institute Buildings—The Competition,
1273

Income Tax—Foreign Companies trading in
England, 47

India—Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Libera-
tion of 25,000 Prisoners, 46

Ireland—Questions

Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—
Acquittals at the Tyrone Winter Assizes,
1747, 1748

Irish Juries—Appointment of Select Com-
mittee, 179

Irish Land Question, 1749

Law and Justice—Jury System, Clare
Assizes, 1751, 1752

Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ire-
land) Act, 1881, and the Purchase of
Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, 1748;—Re-
port of the, 586, 893, 1273, 1274

The Executive—The New Chief Secretary,
1409

Lichfield Charities—Lowe's Charity, 1083

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation),
Motion for Adjournment, 912, 915, 1089,
1666

Lunacy Laws Consolidation—Incorporation of
"The Idiots' Act, 1886," 1037

Parliament—Questions

Private Bill Legislation, 1409

Public Business—Railway Rates and Land
Reform, 47

Rules of Debate — Offensive Language,
1592

Parliament—Business of the House—Ques-
tions

484, 583, 584, 585, 1410, 1411, 1412

Order of Supply, 1361

Rules of Procedure, 305, 724, 1274

Votes and Proceedings, 46

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res.
186, 201, 208, 230, 386, 387, 493, 504, 537,
541, 543, 550, 599, 610, 615, 625, 626, 638,
649, 652, 653, 654; Motion for Adjourn-
ment, 655, 929, 933, 934, 937, 940, 960;

SMITH, Right Hon. W. H.—*cont.*

Amendt. 968, 976, 998; Motion for Adjourn-
ment, 1020, 1276, 1299, 1301, 1324, 1360,
1594, 1597, 1621, 1623, 1624, 1642, 1644,
1645, 1646, 1648, 1657, 1658, 1659, 1661,
1670, 1674, 1686, 1691, 1704

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in An-
swer to, Report, 77, 82, 83

Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Special Service
in Westminster Abbey, 723

Secretary for Scotland, 1749

Street Improvements (Metropolis)—Charing
Cross Road, 893

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1188

Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland, 832, 833,
834

Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1499

Science and Art Department, 836, 838,
842, 1219, 1220, 1223, 1224

Treasury Chest Robbery, 1531

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Army and Navy Estimates, 1592

Tithe (England and Wales), 1591

Trade and Commerce—Depression in Agri-
culture, 304

Manufacture and False Marking of Goods
at Sheffield, 44, 45

SMITH, Mr. S., *Flintshire*

Emigration Statistics for 1886—The Return,
578

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 999

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Science and Art Department, 1423, 1424

Solicitors (Ireland) Bill

(*The Lord Fitzgerald*)

L. Committee * Feb 25

(No. 12)

Report * Mar 1

Read 3^a * Mar 4

Southern Pacific, Islands of the

Disturbances at Tonga, Questions, Mr. W. H.
James; Answers, The Secretary of State
for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) Feb 21,
168; Feb 24, 484; Mar 1, 875

The New Hebrides—Fortifications of the
French, Questions, Mr. Osborne Morgan,
Commander Bethell; Answers, The Under
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir
James Fergusson) Feb 22, 298

SPEAKER, The (Right Hon. ARTHUR
WELLESLEY PEEL), *Warwick and*
Leamington

Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Com-
mittee, 442, 452

Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. 552, 554,
556

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure, 2R. 845

Ecclesiastical Commissioners (Income and Ex-
penditure in Wales), Motion for a Paper,
557

Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commis-
sion, Motion for an Address, 852, 853

First Offenders, 2R. 127

SPEAKER, The—*cont.*

Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 844
Ireland—Distress, &c.—Distress in Kerry, 174
Law and Justice—Jury System—The
Clare Assizes, 1751

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1548, 1549

London Corporation (Charges of Malversation),
Motion for Adjournment, 895

Parliament—Business of the House—Questions

Notice of Motion on going into Committee
of Supply, 724

Order—The Royal Commission on Trade
and Agriculture, 15

Rules of Procedure—Adjourned Debate,
894

Withdrawal of a Question from the Notice
Paper, 1753, 1754

Parliament—Privilege—Imputation upon
Members of this House, 287, 288

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 199, 204, 207, 208, 209, 212, 268, 339,
343, 379, 380, 398, 424, 505, 523, 525, 526,
533, 550, 620, 625, 631, 634, 655, 927, 934,
938, 941, 942, 948, 953, 954, 965, 966, 967,
979, 982, 989, 990, 1001, 1002, 1004, 1007,
1010, 1011, 1012, 1297, 1298, 1301, 1308,
1313, 1320, 1322, 1323, 1325, 1326, 1357,
1359, 1360, 1593, 1594, 1598, 1599, 1600,
1604, 1605, 1625, 1627, 1632, 1633, 1642,
1644, 1646, 1647, 1648, 1657, 1661, 1663,
1664, 1673, 1679, 1680, 1682, 1683, 1697,
1700

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in An-
swer to, Report, 107

Queen's Plates, 581

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm.
114, 845, 854, 849

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation,
2R. 980, 1055, 1056

STACK, Mr. J., *Kerry, N.*

Ireland—Magistracy—Listowel, Co. Kerry,
575

STANHOPE, Earl

Copyhold Enfranchisement, 2R. 867

Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 2R. 656, 665

Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—Defec-
tive Weapons and Stores, Motion for Returns,
6

Wales (Church of England)—Income from
Ecclesiastical Property, Motion for a Re-
turn, 1254

STANHOPE, Right Hon. E. (Secretary
of State for War), *Lincolnshire,
Horncastle*

Army—Questions

Ammunition—Solid-Drawn Cartridges, 468

Army Manufacturing Department—Manu-
facture of Steel at Woolwich, 177, 178,
708;—Steel for Projectiles at Royal
Laboratory, 1584

Army Medical Officers—Status, 691, 1084
Commissions—Standard of Visual Acute-
ness, 1736

STANHOPE, Right Hon. E.—*cont.*

Examinations for Commissions—The
English Language, 156

Imperial Institute—Raglan Barracks, 709;
—Subscription to the—Circular of the
Commander-in-Chief, 298

Medical Staff (India)—Brigade Surgeon
William Graves, 1725

Promotion of Staff Paymasters, 1732

Purchase of Horses for Military Service,
704;—Purchase of Horses in Canada,
164

Retirement of Commanding Officers, 1723

Royal Artillery—Rumoured Reduction of
the Force, 578, 694

Royal Commission on Warlike Stores—The
Report, 566

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Militia (Ireland)—
Supply of Martini-Henry Rifles, 1072

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Volunteers—
Questions

Capitation Grant—Recommendations of
the Recent Committee, 1062

Extra Pay to Permanent Staff, 39

Marching Allowances to Volunteers, 28

Medals for Volunteer Non-Commissioned
Officers, 1257

Volunteer Artillery—Supply of Field Guns,
1072

Army Estimates—Division into Annual and
Permanent, 1585

Army and Navy—"Contracts and Supplies,"
476

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Ser-
vices, 1755, 1756, 1775, 1785, 1827, 1828,
1831, 1832, 1859

Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Riots at Bel-
fast—Extra Pay to the Military, 41

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules
of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 955

Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Commissions to
Non-Commissioned and Warrant Officers
of the Army and Navy, 1596

The Review, 1735

War Office—Questions

Bursting of Rifle Guns—The Return, 1725
Fortification of Singapore—Armament,
882

Ordnance Department—Defective Weapons
—Cutlasses and Sword Bayonets, 299

Superintendent of the Small Arms Factory,
Enfield Lock, 1743

STANHOPE, Hon. P. J., *Wednesbury*

Army—Subscription to the Imperial Institute
—Circular of the Commander-in-Chief, 297

Civil Service Estimates, 1837-8—Fees to Law
Officers of the Crown, 1735

Foreign Powers—Advice and Remonstrance,
483

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1836-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1207

STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, Lord

Glebe Lands, Comm. cl. 11, 1713

STANLEY OF PRESTON, Lord (President
of the Board of Trade)

Dover (Corporation) Harbour, 3R. 663

Railway Rates, 8

Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment Bill

(*Mr. Acland, Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford-Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne*)

c. Read 2^o,* and referred to a Select Committee
Mar 9 [Bill 147]

STEVENSON, Mr. F. S., *Suffolk, Eye*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1005

STEVENSON, Mr. J. C., *South Shields*

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 363

STEWART, Mr. M. J., *Kirkcudbright*

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), 2R. 1545
Salmon Fisheries (Scotland), 1405

STOREY, Mr. S., *Sunderland*

Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1830; Motion for Adjournment, 1831; Amendt. 1833, 1834, 1836, 1840, 1841, 1847, 1855

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 208, 1658, 1662

Parliament—Privilege—Imputation upon Members of this House, 287

STRAFFORD, Earl of

Army—Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and Royal Military Academy, Woolwich—Report of the Board of Visitors, 663

STUART, Mr. J., *Shoreditch, Hoxton*

Great Eastern Railway, 2R. 144

Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 526

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1202
Science and Art Department, 836, 1220, 1412, 1429

War Office (Ordnance Department)—Contract for Cartridges for Queensland, 1583

SULLIVAN, Mr. D., *Westmeath, S.*

Admiralty—Kingstown—Guardship "Belleisle," 1739

Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Fair Rents—Co. Westmeath, 153

Literature, Science, and Art—The Challoner-Smith Collection of Mezzotint Engravings, 1739

Magistracy (England and Wales)—Magistracy of Flintshire, 1740

Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Report, 106

SUPPLY

Resolved, That this House will, on Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty

SUPPLY—cont.

Ordered, That the several Estimates presented to this House, during the present Session, be referred to the Committee of Supply Feb 18

Army and Navy Estimates—Reference to a Committee of the Whole House, Question, Viscount Curzon; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 21, 179

Reference to a Select Committee, Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 28, 723

Army Estimates—Division into Annual and Permanent, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) Mar 8, 1585

Civil Service Estimates, 1887-8—Fees to Law Officers of the Crown, Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Mar 10, 1735

Supply—Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7—The Army and Navy Estimates, Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 8, 1592

SUPPLY

Considered in Committee Feb 28, 725—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7)—CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS, Votes 2, 4, 6, 7, and 27; CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF CIVIL DEPARTMENTS, Votes 5, 9, 11, 15, and 29; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Vote 23; CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Vote 2

Resolutions reported Mar 2

Considered in Committee Mar 3, 1090—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7)—CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Vote 30; CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Vote 18

Resolutions reported Mar 4

Considered in Committee Mar 7, 1412—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886-7) CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART, Votes 2 and 14; CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES, Votes 1, 3, and 5; CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES, Votes 1 and 4; CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS, Votes 3 to 5; REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, Votes 28 and 29

Resolutions reported, and, after short debate, agreed to Mar 8, 1664

Considered in Committee Mar 10, 1755—ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE)—ARMY SERVICES—Votes 1, 9, 12, 13, and 15

Resolution reported Mar 11

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach,*

Mr. Jackson)

c. Committee; after short debate, Committee deferred Feb 18, 114 [Bill 1]

Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" Feb 28, 845
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

SUTHERLAND, Mr. A., *Sutherland*

- Clyde Navigation, Consid. 1568
- Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886—Recovery of Arrears of Rent, 171
- Loss of Life from Fishing Vessels, 701

SUTHERLAND, Mr. T., *Greenock*

- Egypt—Light Dues on Shipping, 162
- Merchant Shipping Act—Transfer of British Ships to Foreign Owners, 1392

Sutton District Water Bill

- Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Sutton District Water Bill, to insert a Clause in such Bill by which provision shall be made for the offer of any additional capital by public auction or tender at the best price which can be obtained, unless the Committee on the Bill shall report that such provision ought not to be required, with the reasons on which their opinion is founded" (*Mr. Molloy*); after short debate, Motion agreed to Feb 18, 9

SWINBURNE, Sir J., *Staffordshire, Lichfield*

- Ambleside Railway, Instruction to the Committee, 452
- Ireland—Evictions—Evictions in Leitrim, 711, 713
- Lichfield Charities—Lowe's Charity, 1083

TALBOT, Mr. J. G., *Oxford University*

- Adulteration Acts—Licensed Victuallers—Westminster, 1574

TANNER, Dr. C., *Cork Co., Mid*

- Admiralty—Coaling Stations—Seychelles, 714
- America—North American Fisheries—Fishery Question, 713
- Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1811; Amendt. 1822, 1824, 1827, 1841, 1842, 1844, 1866, 1867
- Asia (Central)—Reinforcement of the Chinese Garrisons in Turkestan, 1079
- Colonial Service (Pensions), 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 553, 556
- Foynes Harbour (Transfer), 2R. Amendt. 551
- Game Laws—Sale of a Hare without Licence, 1743
- India (Railways)—Bengal-Nagpur Railway, 1257, 1258
- Indian Ocean—The Seychelles—Mr. Clifford Lloyd, 718
- Ireland—Questions
 - Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Action of the Police, 1387
 - Evictions—Evictions in Leitrim, 713
 - Irish Land Commission—Land Court—Fair Rents, 1382
 - Law and Justice—Monaghan Assizes, 1402
 - Local Government Board—Bankers' Account of the Macroom Board of Guardians, 719, 1077
 - Public Meetings, 884, 885
 - Royal Irish Constabulary—County Inspector Brownrigg, 880, 1387, 1388
- London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 913

TANNER, Dr. C.—*cont.*

- Mauritius—Sir John Pope Hennessy, 1266
- Mercantile Marine—Licences for Foreign Pilots, 1258
- Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, 2R. 1869
- Parliament—Business of the House—Order of Supply, 1362
- Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate) Res. 1010
- "Post Office Patronage"—Sub-Office, Bute Street, Cardiff, 1258
- Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
 - Adelaide Exhibition, 1521, 1522
 - Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, &c. 765
 - Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1460, 1461; Amendt. 1503, 1504
 - Houses of Parliament, 728, 730
 - Public Buildings, Great Britain, 737, 738
 - Report, 1664
 - Science and Art Department, &c. 1220, 1435, 1436
 - Treasury Chest Robbery, 1530
- War Office—Superintendent of the Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, 1743
- Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation, 2R. 980, 1050, 1055

THURLOW, Lord

- Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 2R. 854, 862

Tithe (England and Wales)

- Collection of Tithes—Biddenden, Kent, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) Feb 18, 17
- Legislation, Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Mar 8, 1591

TOMLINSON, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*

- Coal Mines—Explosion at Cwtch Rhondda, South Wales, 181
- First Offenders, 2R. 125
- London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), Motion for Adjournment, 914

Trade and Commerce

- Depression in Agriculture—Legislation, Question, Mr. Heneage; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 22, 304
- International Conference on the Sugar Bounties Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) Mar 8, 1589
- Manufacture and False Marking of Goods at Sheffield, Questions, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Coleridge; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 18, 44
- Official Returns of Exports and Imports, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) Mar 8, 1571

Trade and Manufacture—French Prohibition of English Leather

Questions, Mr. Lafone, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 7, 1895*

Trawling, 1885, Royal Commission on

Question, Mr. E. W. Beckett; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *Mar 4, 1263*

TREASURY—First Lord (*see* SMITH, Right Hon. W. H.)

TREASURY—Secretary to (*see* JACKSON, Mr. W. L.)

TREASURY—Secretary to (*see* DOUGLAS, Mr. A. AKERS—)

Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]

(*The Lord Bishop of Truro*)

L. Presented; read 1^a * *Mar 1* (No. 33)
Read 2^a * *Mar 8*
Committee *Mar 10, 1715*

Trustee Savings Banks

Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank, Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Feb 25, 579*

Payments from the Exchequer, Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar 1, 878*

Remedies against Trustees, Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) *Feb 21, 170*

TUITE, Mr. J., Westmeath, N.

India (Madras)—Board of Inland Revenue, 697; —The Collector of Chingleput, 695

Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Fair Rents, Co. Westmeath, 158

Parliament—Queen's Speech—Address in Answer to, Report, Amendt. 106, 109, 111

Post Office Contracts—Conveyance between Mullingar and Ballymahon, 1737

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Public Education, Ireland, 1441

TYLER, Sir H. W., Great Yarmouth

Army—Royal Artillery—Rumoured Reduction of the Force, 578

Army Estimates—Division into Annual and Permanent, 1585

Egypt—Negotiations at Constantinople, 166

Parliament—House of Commons—Fogs, 1397

Poor Law—Case of James Westbury, an Agricultural Labourer, 574

Slave Trade—Revival in the Soudan and the Red Sea Littoral, 43

Vaccination

A Commission or Committee, Question, Mr. T. Robinson; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 1, 883*

Increase of Syphilis, Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Feb 24, 462*

Inquiry by the Royal Statistical Society, Questions, Sir Charles Russell; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 4, 1270*

Knightley, &c., Question, Mr. Barran; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Feb 28, 693*

Case of James Bamford, Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 8, 1573*

Cumulative Penalties—Case of Charles Hayward, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 4, 1265*

Mr. Robert King, Evington, Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar 4, 1267*; Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar 7, 1393*

Vagrant Act Amendment Bill

(Mr. C. Dyke Acland, Mr. Caine, Mr. Harry Davenport, Sir Robert Fowler, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Henry Wilson)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Mar 10* [Bill 192]

Venezuela

Suspension of Diplomatic Relations with Great Britain, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), *Feb 28, 723*

Protection of British Subjects, Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 3, 1084*

British Guiana and Venezuela—The Boundary Line, Questions, Mr. Watt, Mr. Staveley Hill; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 7, 1402*; Question, Mr. Staveley Hill; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar 10, 1721*

VERNON, Lord

Railway Rates, 7

VERNON, Hon. G. R., Ayrshire, S.

Fisheries (Scotland)—Trawling at Ballantrae, Ayrshire, 1580

Vexatious Indictments Amendment Bill

{(Mr. Addison, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Fulton)

c. Ordered; read 1^o * *Feb 28* [Bill 182]

VINCENT, Mr. C. E. H., *Sheffield, Central America* (South)—Venezuela—Suspension of Diplomatic Relations, 723
 Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Volunteer Force—Capitation Grant—Recommendations of the Recent Committee, 1061
 Army Manufacturing Department—Manufacture of Steel at Woolwich, 177, 708
 First Offenders, 2R. 119; Comm. 1544
 Merchandise Marks Acts—Consolidation, 1259
 Police and Constabulary Forces in Great Britain—Superannuation, 34
 Trade and Commerce—Official Returns of Exports and Imports, 1571

WADDY, Mr. S. D., *Lincolnshire, Brigg*
 Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Services, 1821

Wales (*Church of England*)—Income from Ecclesiastical Property—Augmentation of Benefices

Moved for, "Return showing the net annual income derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from property in Wales, and the annual payments made by them to the bishops, chapters, archdeacons, &c., in Wales, and the annual value of the grants made by the Commissioners in augmentation of benefices in Wales" (*The Earl of Powis*)
 Mar 4, 1253; Motion agreed to

WALLACE, Mr. R., *Edinburgh, E.*
 Scotland—Register House, Edinburgh—Searches of Incumbrances, 1717

WALSH, Hon. A. H. J., *Radnorshire*
 Agricultural Labourers' Allotments, 722

WAR DEPARTMENT—Secretary of State
 (*see* STANHOPE, Right Hon. E.)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Under Secretary of State (*see* HARRIS, Lord)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Financial Secretary
 (*see* BRODRICK, Hon. W. St. J. F.)

WARING, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
 Ireland—Crime and Outrage—"Boycotting"
 —Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Castlewellan, Co. Down, 873
 Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1164

WATT, Mr. H., *Glasgow, Camlachie*
 America (South)—British Guiana and Venezuela—The Boundary Line, 1402
 Factories Acts—The Truck Acts in Scotland, 301
 Great Britain and Venezuela—Cessation of Diplomatic Relations—Protection of British Subjects, 1084
 Literature, Science, and Art—The Schools at South Kensington—Surplus of Exhibition of 1851, 1745

WAYS AND MEANS

Inland Revenue

Assessment of Licensed Victuallers in Ealing and Brentford, Question, Mr. Bigwood; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 24, 463
Custom House, Dublin, Question, Mr. P. McDonald; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 21, 169
Experiment in Tobacco Cultivation, Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) Feb 24, 481
The "Death Duties" on Land in Ulster, Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Mar 10, 1720
The Dog Tax, Question, Mr. Coghill; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 28, 718

Income Tax

Allowance to Colliery Proprietors, Question, Mr. Brooke Robinson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Mar 10, 1731
Assessment on Public Baths and Wash-houses, St. Pancras, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 22, 297
Collection of Income Tax, Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 24, 461
Commissioners of Inland Revenue—Return of Income Tax—Dividend Warrants of Railway Companies, Question, Mr. Halsey; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Mar 3, 1061
Foreign Companies Trading in England, Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) Feb 18, 47
Married Women's Property Act, Question, Captain Selwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) Feb 25, 577

WAYS AND MEANS

Resolved, That this House will, upon Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty Feb 18

WEBSTER, Sir R. E. (Attorney General),
Isle of Wight

First Offenders, 2R. 123
 High Court of Justice—Chancery Division—Distribution of Business, 25
 High Court of Justice in England—Scotch Cases—"Jones v. Scottish Accident Insurance Company," 1575
 Law of Evidence—Evidence of Accused Persons, 709
 Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate), Res. 1657
 Post Office (England and Wales)—Transmission of a False and Unsigned Telegram, 39
 Right of Public Meeting (England and Ireland)—The Plan of Campaign—Suppression of Public Meetings, 1274

WEBSTER, Sir R. E.—*cont.*

Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Constabulary Force in Ireland, 1214, 1217
Trustee Savings Banks—Remedies against
Trustees, 171

WEBSTER, Mr. R. G., *St. Pancras, E.*
Gold and Silver Currency (Royal Commission)
—First Report, 459
Westminster Bridge, 460

Weights and Measures Act, 1878—"Further
Legislation"

Question, Mr. Lawson : Answer, The Secretary
to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry
De Worms) Feb 18, 25

WENLOCK, Lord
Horse Breeding and Supply for Military and
Industrial Purposes, 1378

Westminster Bridge
Question, Mr. Webster ; Answer, The First
Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket)
Feb 24, 460

*Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Corporation
Bill (by Order)*
c. 2R. deferred, after short debate Mar 2, 980
Read 2^o, after debate Mar 3, 1050

WHITBREAD, Mr. S., *Bedford*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 215, 654, 931, 936, 938, 940, 953 ;
Amendt. 1012, 1296, 1297, 1326

WHITMORE, Mr. C. A., *Chelsea*
Horses—Prohibition of Exportation from
Germany to England, 1077
Metropolis—Street Improvements—New Line
of St. Martin's Place, 462

WIGGIN, Mr. H., *Staffordshire, Handsworth*
Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment—
Hall-Marking of Watch Cases, 1078

WILLIAMS, Mr. A. J., *Glamorgan, S.*
Mercantile Marine—Shipwrecks on the Glamorgan-
shire Coast—Coastguard Station at
Southerndown, 1062

WILLIAMSON, Mr. S., *Kilmarnock, &c.*
Supply (Supplementary Estimates, 1886-7)—
Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1469

WILSON, Sir S., *Portsmouth*
Greenwich Hospital Funds—Investment, 1088,
1722
Queen's Jubilee Celebration—Commissions to
Non-Commissioned and Warrant Officers of
the Army and Navy, 1586
Street Improvements (Metropolis)—Charing
Cross Road, 893

WILSON, Mr. H. J., *York, W.R., Holmfirth*
Elementary Education—Irregular Attendance
—Mr. Paget, Wandsworth Police Court, 29

WINTERBOTHAM, Mr. A. B., *Gloucester, Cirencester*
Poor Law—Case of James Westbury, an Agri-
cultural Labourer, 572, 574

WOODALL, Mr. W., *Hanley*
Army (Supplementary Estimate)—Army Ser-
vices, 1828, 1846
Education Department—Building Grants to
Science Schools and Art Schools, 572

WORTLEY, Mr. C. B. STUART—(Under
Secretary of State for the Home
Department), *Sheffield, Hallam*
Election Expenses, 1886—The Return, 299
Factories Acts—Truck Acts in Scotland, 301
General Election, 1886—Charges of Returning
Officers (Scotland), 1572
Lunacy—Detention of an Alleged Lunatic, 36,
710
Prison Labour—Mat-Making, 33, 1068

WORKS—First Commissioner (*see* PLUNKET,
Right Hon. D. R.)

WORKS, METROPOLITAN BOARD OF—
Chairman (*see* M'GAREL-HOGG, Sir
J. M.)

WRIGHT, Mr. C., *Lancashire, S.W., Leigh*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of
Procedure)—Rule 1 (Closure of Debate),
Res. 1000, 1001

WRIGHT, Mr. H. S., *Nottingham, S.*
Clyde Navigation, Cousid. 1566
Post Office (England and Wales)—Telegraph
Clerks, 177, 1063

ERRATA.

Page 44, for Sir John R. Mowbray (Oxford University), read Mr. R. G. C. Mowbray,
(Lancashire, Prestwich).

Page 994, line 19, from top, for "Bradford," read "Bedford."

END OF VOLUME CCCXI., AND SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.

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